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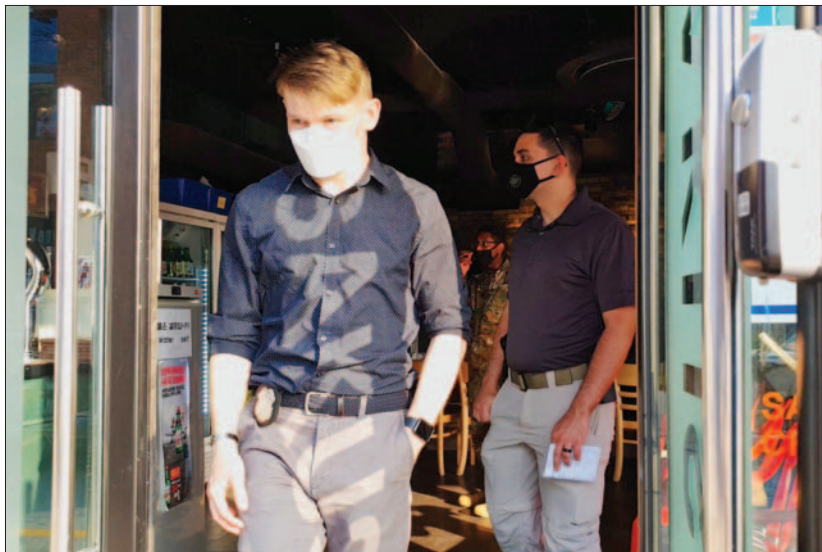
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VIRUS OUTBREAK



MATTHEW KEELER/Stars and Stripes

Spc. Jacob Kincer and Spc. Nicholas Woznick, investigators with the 557th Military Police Company, patrol outside the gates of Camp Humphreys, South Korea, on May 1.

Hitting the hotspots

Virus forces US military police to expand off-base patrols of Korean establishments

By MATTHEW KEELER
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Routine U.S. military police patrols into the entertainment district outside Camp Humphreys took on new meaning when coronavirus cases, seemingly curbed in South Korea, resurfaced with the loosening of social-distancing measures.

Just a week ago, new cases were being re-

■ Online: Get the latest on the virus outbreak
[stripes.com/coronavirus](https://www.stripes.com/coronavirus)

ported in the single digits. That number has grown nearly eight-fold following an outbreak in Seoul's popular nightlife district in

Iteawon. Anyone who visited clubs and bars there between April 30 and May 6 is likely to have been exposed to the virus, according to the Korean Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.

Courtesy patrols by military police have been standard practice for years. Police routinely visit drinking establishments outside the gates of nearly every U.S. military

After attacks, Afghan forces resume effort against Taliban

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghan security forces resumed operations against the Taliban on Wednesday, a day after attacks against a hospital in Kabul and a funeral in Nangarhar province claimed the lives of at least 40 people, officials said.

"Our offensive operations are started today all over Afghanistan, based on President [Ashraf] Ghani's order," Afghan Defense Ministry deputy spokesman Fawad Aman said.

Ghani ordered the military to resume operations against the Taliban in a televised speech Tuesday night, citing increased levels of violence by the insurgent group.

NATO's Resolute Support command said Wednesday that international forces would continue "defensive strikes" against the Taliban if they attack Afghan forces but will not shift to an offensive posture.

Ghani's order came the same day Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called for the Afghan government and Taliban to work together to find the perpetrators of two deadly attacks Tuesday in different parts of Afghanistan.

SEE ATTACKS ON PAGE 4



RAHMAT GUL/AP

A man is consoled after an attack in a maternity hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Tuesday.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Dispute over Tesla reopening coming to an end

By **TOM KRISHER**
Associated Press

DETROIT — It appears the dispute between Tesla and San Francisco Bay Area authorities over the reopening of a factory in the face of shutdown orders is coming to an end.

The Alameda County Public Health Department announced on Twitter early Wednesday that the Fremont, Calif., plant will be able to go beyond basic operations this week and start making

vehicles next Monday — as long as it delivers on the worker safety precautions that it agreed to.

It wasn't clear from a press release whether Tesla would face any punishment for reopening in defiance of county orders.

The Health Department said Monday it warned the company was operating in violation of the county health order, and hoped Tesla will "comply without further enforcement measures" until the county approves a site-specific plan required by the state.

State law allows a fine of up to \$1,000 a day or up to 90 days in jail for operating in violation of health orders.

The plant in Fremont, a city of more than 230,000 people south of San Francisco, had been closed since March 23. It employs about 10,000 workers.

Tesla released a plan to maintain worker safety, including the wearing of gloves and masks, installing barriers between workers and maintaining social distancing.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (May 14)	\$1.06
Dollar buys (May 14)	40.8963
British pound (May 14)	\$1.20
Japanese yen (May 14)	105.00
South Korean won (May 14)	1,196.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3774
British pound	\$1.2271
Canada (Dollar)	1.4054
China (Yuan)	7.0994
Denmark (Krone)	6.8645
Egypt (Pound)	15.7501
Euro	\$1.0682/0.9207
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7507
Hungary (Forint)	25.37
Israel (Shekel)	3.5132
Japan (Yen)	107.03
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3091
Norway (Krone)	10.1003
Philippines (Peso)	50.26
Poland (Zloty)	4.21
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7580
Singapore (Dollar)	1.4173
South Korea (Won)	1,224.58

Switzerland (Franc)	0.9690
Thailand (Baht)	32.05
Turkey (New Lira)	6.9759

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	0.25
Federal funds market rate	0.05
3-month bill	0.13
30-year bond	1.38

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THURSDAY IN EUROPE



FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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MILITARY

Army to resume drills in Europe with precautions

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Thousands of U.S. and Polish soldiers will participate in drills next month, marking the first time since the coronavirus crisis began that American troops will assemble for a large-scale exercise in Europe.

"All COVID-19 precautionary measures will be taken to ensure the health and protection of participating armed forces and the local population," U.S. Army Europe said in a statement Wednesday.

Called Allied Spirit, the drill is connected to the scaled-down version of Defender Europe-20, a series of events that was intended to be among the largest Army training efforts on the Continent since the Cold War.

USAREUR said Allied Spirit, which was originally scheduled for May, will be held at Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area in Poland from June 5 to June 19.

About 6,000 U.S. and Polish soldiers will take part in the exercise, which will involve a Polish airborne operation and a U.S.-Polish division-sized river crossing, USAREUR said.

Roughly 4,000 U.S. soldiers will come from the 1st Cavalry Division Headquarters (Forward), the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team and the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division. Some 2,000 Polish soldiers will come from airborne, cavalry and mechanized units.

In March, the Pentagon ordered a halt to deployments for Defender Europe 20 because of coronavirus concerns. Major parts of the exercise were eliminated, including an operation that involved paratroops dropping into the Republic of Georgia and the Baltics.

Defender, originally intended to include 20,000 U.S.-based troops, was designed to showcase the military's ability to mobilize large numbers of forces for missions in Europe. Such capabilities have become a priority amid concerns about a more aggressive Russia.

The Army had already deployed 6,000 troops, including a division headquarters and an armored brigade combat team, when the decision was made to reduce the exercise. About 90% of the equipment also had already been loaded on ships or aircraft.

Many strategic objectives were met despite the cancellations,



BRIAN K. RAGIN JR./U.S. Army

Soldiers of the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division at Konotop Range, Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area, Poland, on April 18. Soldiers from 3rd ID will be among the 6,000 troops training in Poland in the Allied Spirit exercise scheduled for next month.



SAVANNAH ROY/U.S. Army

Pilots from the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, send rounds down the range during aerial gunnery on April 29 in Grafenwoehr, Germany. Members of the 3rd CAB will take part in Allied Spirit.

USAREUR said. However, the Army is planning exercises over the next few months that will aim to achieve some of Defender's previous goals, including drawing from Army pre-positioned

weapons stocks around Europe.

Also, the 10th Army Air & Missile Defense Command and the 41st Field Artillery Brigade are expected to participate in exercises in the Baltic region, while

the Italy-based 173rd Airborne Brigade is planning airborne operations in the Balkans and Black Sea regions.

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Vet pilots see first survey data on how many have cancer

By TARA COPP

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Last fall, the Red River Valley Fighter Pilots Association asked its 3,400 members, all current or former military pilots, to respond to a survey about whether they had been diagnosed with cancer. The response was "astounding," a leader of the group said.

A total of 894 association members, known as "River Rats," responded to the seven-question survey which asked, "Have you ever been diagnosed with cancer?" The results of the survey were shared exclusively with

'500 of them, 56% of them, said 'Yes, I am disclosing a personal cancer.' That was astonishing. I was not prepared for that.'

Col. Vince Alcazar
retired Air Force F-15E Strike Eagle pilot

McClatchy.

"500 of them, 56% of them, said 'Yes, I am disclosing a personal cancer.' That was astonishing. I was not prepared for that," said retired Air Force F-15E Strike Eagle pilot Col. Vince "Aztec" Alcazar, in an interview with McClatchy. Alcazar, who does not have cancer, serves on the association's medical issues committee.

Of the 500 respondents who disclosed at least one cancer, "13% of them disclosed multiple cancers," Alcazar said.

The most commonly reported cancer was melanoma or skin cancer, and the second most common was prostate cancer, Alcazar said.

The survey's limitations included that it only captured the number of cancers among living members and does not reflect

how many of its former members had died of cancer.

It also didn't track what type of aircraft the pilot flew or age at diagnosis. Alcazar said the association kept the questions limited in order to get the most responses possible, and avoid any privacy concerns.

The association plans to approach Congress with this initial data to seek legislation for a more exhaustive scientific study, conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense to review the medical records of all pilots, living and deceased, for the last several decades to determine how many have had cancer.

"Now I've got a narrative to take to lawmakers on Capitol Hill," Alcazar said. "It's just not four or five or 10 or 20 or 100

emails" of personal stories of pilot cancers, he said. "It's a large organization that took the time to do a well thought-out survey. And the results say, 'It's worth a look, folks.'"

The association would like to see a congressionally mandated study of all military pilots and air crews for all types of military aircraft. The Air Force is conducting such a study of all its former aviators going back to 1970.

Several lawmakers, including Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., have introduced legislation to look at aspects of military pilot cancers.

An investigation by McClatchy last fall found that the rate of treatment at VA health care facilities for various types of cancers across the services had skyrocketed over the last two decades. For example, prostate cancer treatment rates among Air Force veterans rose 44% from fiscal year 2000 to fiscal year 2018.

Alcazar said the River Rats have shared their initial survey findings with Air Force leadership.

Even though the association's 3,400 aviator membership is large, it is a small sliver of the total number of retired Air Force and

Navy aviators who have served as pilots or crew on fighter, surveillance, ground attack, transport or other aircraft.

For example, between 800 and 1,000 Navy pilots or aircrew left the military each year between fiscal year 1999 and fiscal year 2018, according to data provided to McClatchy by the Navy.

The Air Force did not immediately provide the numbers of how many of the approximately 19,000 currently serving aviators leave military service each year.

Getting actual numbers on the likelihood of cancer among pilots could help the military medical community save lives, Alcazar said.

"You walk into a VA hospital for the first time. They go 'Oh, you flew F-18s in the Marine Corps.' Or, 'You flew F-16s in the United States Air Force.' There's a whole bunch of certain kinds of cancers that have been found to be a little bit more common in these groups of pilots than they are in the mainstream population," he said. "So we're going to start looking at indicators. We're going to start screening for those."

Correction

A May 13 story on the Aviano Idol competition should have identified one of the judges as Master Sgt. Nathan Parry. The shows will appear on the 31st Force Support Squadron's Facebook page.

WAR/MILITARY

3D mammograms accessible soon for Tricare users

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

DID YOU KNOW?

■ Female breast cancer represents 15.2% of all new cancer cases in the U.S.

■ 62% of breast cancer cases are diagnosed at a localized stage, for which the 5-year survival rate is 99%.

SOURCE: National Breast Cancer Foundation, Inc.

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department will add 3D breast cancer screenings to its Tricare coverage after female veterans in Congress pushed the Pentagon to make it available to active-duty service members, retirees and their families.

The permanent change will take effect May 29, according to a Pentagon policy memorandum issued last month. Tricare users over age 30 will be eligible for digital breast tomosynthesis, a 3D mammogram said to better detect breast cancer.

"This is a major victory for our female service members and veterans covered under TRI-CARE," Sen. Martha McSally, R-Ariz., said Tuesday in a statement. "Women in our Armed Forces now have access to the best preventative breast cancer screenings. I'm glad the Defense Department heard our repeated calls for change and implemented this commonsense policy."

The Pentagon first made 3D mammogram available under Tricare starting Jan. 1, 2020, but only on a temporary basis. Tricare offered DBT in some instances for diagnosing patients but not for routine screenings.

Thomas McCaffery, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, said in December he could not approve the addition of DBT for screenings permanently because the United States Preventive Services Task Force doesn't

recommend the technology. It wasn't immediately clear Tuesday what caused the Pentagon to make the change permanent starting May 29.

Digital breast tomosynthesis builds a three-dimensional image of a breast to better detect and diagnose cancer, especially for women with dense tissue. The technology is available to women who use Medicare or the Department of Veterans Affairs for their health care. Tricare, though, covered only mammograms with two-dimensional images, which McSally and other lawmakers contended was a suboptimal standard of care.

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer for women, with one in eight women developing it in their lifetimes, according to the American Cancer Society. DBT has been found to help radiologists detect breast cancer and to reduce the need for biopsies.

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Virus helps ISIS, says top Norwegian military official

Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — Islamic State militants hide in sparsely populated farmlands in Iraq from where they stage attacks on Iraqi forces scrambling to curb the spread of the coronavirus in the country, the head of the 70-man Norwegian contingent in this Mideast nation was quoted as saying Wednesday.

Iraq is not just facing the global pandemic but also a resurgence of attacks by the Islamic State group and a financial crunch as oil prices plummet to historic lows — a crisis for a nation depending on crude exports to fund 90% of its state expenditures.

The militants "reside in agricultural areas and are thus not particularly susceptible to the virus infection," Lt. Col. Stein Grongs-

taid told Norway's VG newspaper. In recent weeks, they have been targeting Iraqi forces "that are not currently coordinated to the same extent as before the virus struck."

Grongstad described the situation as a "paradox," that at a time when the world is grappling with the pandemic, ISIS attacks are on the rise.

"The Islamic State group has been moving the fighting from Iraq to Iraq ... (and) is strengthening, both financially and militarily," he said.

Since 2017, a Norwegian contingent has been based in western Iraq's vast and mostly desert Anbar province, where it trains and advises Iraqi security forces. Iraq has reported more than 2,700 cases of coronavirus infections, including 109 deaths.



PHOTOS BY RAHMAT GUL/AP

Above: Newborn babies lie in their beds at the Ataturk Children's Hospital a day after they were rescued from a deadly attack on another maternity hospital, in Kabul, Afghanistan, Wednesday. Below: Families of newborn babies wait outside the Ataturk Children's Hospital to see their children.

Attacks: Intensity, barbarity of attacks puts pressure on Afghanistan's leader to respond

FROM FRONT PAGE

At least 24 people were killed, including two newborns, in an attack on a maternity clinic run by international medical organization Doctors Without Borders at a hospital in Kabul, the Afghan public health ministry said, revisiting the death toll upward. No one has claimed responsibility for that attack.

A separate attack on the funeral of a police commander in eastern Nangarhar province, which killed at least 25 people and wounded at least 68, has been claimed by Islamic State.

The Taliban have denied involvement in both attacks.

Pompeo called the attacks "heinous" and "particularly appalling" in a statement Tuesday. But noting that the Taliban have said they were not involved in either assault, he called on the insurgent group and the Afghan government to work together "to bring the perpetrators to justice."

That statement "does not signal encouragement for a re-escalation of conflict," said Andrew Watkins, a senior Afghanistan analyst at the Brussels-based International Crisis Group think tank.

Afghan security forces adopted a defensive posture before the



Taliban and U.S. signed a deal on Feb. 29 that was meant to lead to a negotiated end of nearly 20 years of war. The deal says that if the Taliban keep terrorists from operating in Afghanistan, stop attacking the U.S. and its allies, and hold intra-Afghan peace talks with the government, foreign forces would begin a phased withdrawal and be out of the country by early summer next year.

But the Taliban relented attacks on Afghan troops almost immediately after the deal was reached and violence across the country has continued.

Although Ghani's office refused to comment on whether Tuesday's attacks led him to order troops back onto the offensive, the public

reaction to the violence may have forced him to take action, Watkins said.

"The intensity of many Kabul residents' responses to the barbarity of Tuesday's attacks seemed to put immediate political pressure on Ghani," he said.

However, Ghani's announcement doesn't necessarily represent the end of the tenuous peace process, Watkins said.

"No party wants to be seen as the reason this process fails — even when posturing or acting in ways that make it more difficult," he said.

Zubair Babakarkhali contributed to this report.
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Warship spills 4K gallons of fuel into river

Associated Press

YORKTOWN, Va. — A large warship spilled 4,000 gallons of fuel into a Virginia river late last week, the U.S. Navy has confirmed.

The USS Philipine Sea, a guided-missile cruiser, spilled the diesel fuel into the York River on Thursday morning, news outlets reported.

The ship was at a pier at the Naval Weapons Station in Yorktown at the time, according to Ted Brown, a U.S. Fleet Forces Command Environmental Public Affairs Officer. A Navy oil recovery team and the U.S. Coast Guard responded, and most of the fuel was contained, officials said. Cleanup efforts began immediately using a fuel vacuum truck and fuel-absorbing materials, Brown added.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Marines outline prioritized PCS schedule

Plan groups those moving to new duty stations into 3 tiers

By IMMANUEL JOHNSON
Stars and Stripes

Marines whose moves are now in limbo, along with others planning to move this year, will be grouped into three different scheduling tiers as the U.S. Transportation Command battles a permanent change of station backlog throughout the military.

The service outlined its prioritized PCS scheduling in a memo Tuesday, based on an expected June 30 expiration date for the Defense Department's "stop move," which had been ordered to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

The adjusted plan is designed to help TRANSCOM and the Distribution Management Office grapple with a four-month delay in household goods shipments.



U.S. Transportation Command

Marines moving to new duty stations will be prioritized into three tiers as U.S. Transportation Command works to clear a four-month backlog.

The first tier, slated to move in July and August, includes Marines heading to or returning from unaccompanied overseas tours, command teams inbound to field grade commands or

above, and those on joint billets in the Office of the Secretary of Defense or Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Also in that tier are Marines going to or returning from assignments at formal schools, whether

as students, staff or instructors, and not already authorized to PCS under exceptions to policy.

In the second wave, which is scheduled for August and September, are those going to or from accompanied overseas tours and Marines heading to Inspector-Instructor duty, to squadrons supporting the F-35 aircraft stand-up, on individual mobilization orders or to certain other units.

Some Marines in this tier have already had their orders modified once to accommodate stints left on their service contracts that may now be too short to ordinarily allow for their moves, said Sgt. Jorge RiberaPedraza, a career planner for Marine Aircraft Group 49.

It's still unclear how the new memo and timelines will affect those Marines, he said.

The third tier of moves, expected to begin in September and complete by the end of November, include others moving to or from assignments in the continental United States and Hawaii.

The tiers do not apply to moves

within 50 miles or changes of assignment at the same duty station — which the service plans to use as much as possible — nor do they affect full do-it-yourself moves, also known as "DITY moves," which must be approved by Marine chains of command. Other exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis, the memo said.

Marines with orders should try to schedule their goods shipments "without delay" to help ease the burden on the transportation system, the memo stated.

Commanders can approve shipments to begin as soon as this month, with the Marine's travel slated for July or later, but doing so may incur higher lodging costs that won't be covered by added temporary allowances or entitlements.

Marines may also extend tours, but will need to submit requests to Headquarters Marine Corps with command approval.

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Patrols: Teams are usually accompanied by local police officers

FROM FRONT PAGE

installation in the country to ensure service members are behaving.

Now, because of the declaration of a public health emergency by U.S. Forces Korea commander Gen. Robert Abrams, military police are also peering inside restaurants and barbershops to ensure U.S. personnel are complying with health protection condition restrictions.

USFK personnel must avoid gatherings of more than 15 people. Off-base activities such as dining at restaurants and visiting barbershops, bars, movie theaters and amusement parks remain prohibited.

"We need to stop the virus," said Sgt. 1st Class Alex Reyes, the provost sergeant for Area III, which encompasses Camp Humphreys. "The way we can do it as law enforcement professionals is by actually visiting the hotspots and making sure everyone is complying with [restrictions]." The Camp Humphreys task force consists of a noncommissioned officer, three soldiers and three South Korean troops serving as Korean Augmentation to the U.S. Army, or KATUSAs.

"The objective is to be a visible presence in the town checking bars, restaurants and clubs making sure that people and our soldiers are not violating the [health protection condition] restrictions or committing any crimes," Reyes said.

The soldiers rotate shifts, taking roughly an hour to walk the entertainment district and make sure U.S. personnel are practicing social distancing and not remaining stationary for too long.

However, the patrol teams have essentially zero jurisdiction beyond the installation. They can't detain or demand anyone they believe has an affiliation with the garison to provide identification.

For example, the team approached a young American man with a military-style haircut exiting an off-base barbershop on May 1. Questioned, he denied any affiliation with Camp Humphreys or USFK and

"We need to stop the virus. The way we can do it as law enforcement professionals is by actually visiting the hotspots and making sure everyone is complying with [restrictions]."

Sgt. 1st Class Alex Reyes

was allowed to go on his way.

For that reason, Reyes said, the patrols are usually accompanied by local police officers.

"We have the backup," Reyes said. "When we go out on town patrols, we meet up with our Korea national police counterparts. They have primary jurisdiction off post."

Anyone who refuses to identify themselves to South Korean authorities may be taken into custody and turned over to military authorities, Reyes explained.

Violators are escorted back on post and their chain of command or supervisors are notified of the violation.

Several service members have been reduced in rank and Defense Department civilians barred from all U.S. installations in South Korea for breaching the public health regulations.

The virus outbreak has proven to be an unexpected adversary for junior law enforcement.

"This wasn't something I was expecting when I first joined," said Spc. Jacob Kincer, an investigator with the 557th Military Police Company. "It's all about changing with the tide that they're thrown into and figuring out what flow you need to go with to be able to protect the base, no matter what they can do over there."

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ANDREW HARRIN/AP

The Department of Justice, shown above, said that hackers have been attempting to obtain intellectual property and public health data related to vaccines.

US: Chinese hackers likely targeting virus researchers

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Organizations conducting research into COVID-19 may be targeted by computer hackers linked to the Chinese government, according to the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security.

Neither agency cited any specific examples Wednesday, but they warned that institutions and companies involved in work on vaccines, treatments and testing for the novel coronavirus should take additional security measures to protect data and be aware of the potential threat.

"China's efforts to target these sectors pose a significant threat to our nation's response to COVID-19," said a statement from the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. "This announcement is intended to raise awareness for research institutions and the American public and provide resources and guidance for those who may be targeted."

It comes amid heightened tensions be-

tween the two countries over the source of the outbreak and Trump administration complaints that China did not adequately alert the world to the danger posed by the new coronavirus.

The warning also echoes long-standing U.S. complaints that China has engaged in the wholesale theft of technology and trade secrets to build its economy.

Institutions that have received media attention for their efforts related to COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, should assume that they would be targeted and should take precautions, the Department of Justice said.

"The potential theft of this information jeopardizes the delivery of secure, effective, and efficient treatment options," it said.

The FBI and the cybersecurity agency said they were issuing the alert to raise public awareness of the potential threat and said additional technical details would be released in the coming days.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Commanders turn to social media to inform

By JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — The commander in charge of Sasebo Naval Base in southwestern Japan began a recent Q&A session on Facebook Live with a sweeping update of the coronavirus pandemic.

Capt. Brad Stallings put the number of American lives the disease had claimed in terms of the wars the country has waged: 24 times more than the Afghan War, 11 times the Iraq conflict, twice as many as the American Revolution and nearly the same number of American service members killed in Vietnam.

"That's sobering, and that's in under two months," he said April 23. "Our country is hurting."

During the pandemic, service members have been listening to their leaders in more relaxed settings via social media instead of morning formations or auditorium assemblies.

Commanding officers around bases in Japan are using Facebook Live, for example, to update base restrictions, quell rumors, upbraid rule breakers and inspire their troops to stay the course.

The exchange is two-way, as leaders like Stallings respond to questions coming at them, although often filtered by public affairs officers, in real time. Service members, their families and



U.S. Navy

Sasebo Naval Base commander Capt. Brad Stallings, in front of microphone, uses Facebook Live to speak to sailors during the coronavirus pandemic last month.

civilian employees meanwhile take in the show anonymously on their home screens, tapping out questions and hitting emoji buttons.

At Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, base commander Col. Lance Lewis said his team began preparing for the coronavirus in January.

Lewis said he quickly realized the pandemic would not just be a Marine Corps problem, it would affect 13,500 people within his responsibility — Marines, sailors, their families and civilian

employees, including Japanese citizens, working on base.

He needed to communicate rapidly across 30 tenant commands, including a Marine air group and Navy and Japanese air wings.

Lewis focused on a social media campaign using the air station's official Facebook page to counter misinformation while providing frequent updates of time, accurate information.

He borrowed a technique from U.S. military commanders in Korea and Europe who were first to confront the virus on U.S. in-

stallations, Lewis said during a May 1 interview with Stars and Stripes. He personally penned Facebook updates nearly every day during the first six weeks of the Defense Department's response to the pandemic.

Lewis employed a Marine Corps Communications Strategy and Operations team to produce his messaging. The shop employs public relations specialists, photographers, broadcasters and videographers.

Lewis said his priority was providing accurate information from credible, trustworthy sources right from the get-go.

Initially, Navy doctors at the base's Branch Health Clinic provided medical information, Lewis said. He said he used direct quotes from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to refute rumors circulating on social media.

"We were very open and honest with our procedures, and the 'why' behind things," he said. "Instead of saying, 'Wear masks!' full stop. It was 'We need to wear masks because ...'"

In some cases, commanders used social media to confirm rumors. Stallings used the base Facebook page May 4 to announce that some sailors had violated movement restrictions over a previous weekend.

In other sessions, he, like other commanders, connected with his

troops in more personal ways. During a livestream last month, Stallings shared that he had lost a cousin to the coronavirus and would be unable to attend the funeral.

"It's frustrating in so many ways to be stuck at home," he said.

Spontaneously or on cue, commanders also displayed flashes of wit.

Lewis, for example, in an April 20 post explained that the city of Hiroshima is off limits, take-out from off-base restaurants are not allowed and face coverings are required indoors.

"Finally, to put one of the longest standing arguments known to man to rest, 'The Empire Strikes Back' is and has always been the best Star Wars movie," he concluded.

Lewis said that just as the Marine Corps developed its communications strategy units from lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan, the pandemic has added its own page to that story.

Disseminating accurate information and crushing misinformation is now a focus of military leaders, he said. Responding to coronavirus is teaching leaders up and down the chain of command how to do it with compassion, humor, and gravity to reach the widest possible audience.

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Air Force band covers 'Cowboy Bebop' theme with Japanese musicians

By THERON GODBOLD
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Air Force musicians teamed up with Japanese troops and a local high school band to record a music video intended to lift people's spirits during the coronavirus pandemic.

The project yielded a version of "Tank!", the theme song for the popular Japanese anime TV series "Cowboy Bebop." The Air Force Band of the Pacific-Asia used social distancing to produce the project with a Tachikawa city FM radio station, Hamura city high-schoolers and Japan Air Self-Defense Force musicians.

"What makes this project so good is its collaboration with our host nation," band leader and saxophonist Master Sgt. Jeremiah True told Stars and Stripes on May 8. "It was a no-brainer in my opinion."

In April, the Air Force band's community relations specialist, Masato Yagi, contacted FM Tachikawa president Noriaki Kaji with an idea: have the band and the station work together on something to entertain listeners staying home due to the coronavirus

outbreak, Kaji said by phone Tuesday.

A plan came together with support from the JASDF Central Band, which practices at Camp Higashi in Tachikawa, and the Daiichi Junior/Senior High School band.

The song was chosen April 23 and FM Tachikawa obtained the rights to record it.

About 50 people, including more than 30 musicians, worked at a distance to plan, record and edit the project. The resulting 4-minute video has received thousands of "likes" on the JASDF band's Facebook page and nearly 6,000 views on the radio station's YouTube channel since it was posted May 6.

A coveted solo went to Senior Airman Derrick Newbold, a veteran saxophonist from Miami who joined the Air Force four years ago and has been stationed at Yokota his entire career.

"It was just a great opportunity to experience and play in a new setting and learn," he said. "I also really like the song 'Tank!'; it's fun to play."

"Cowboy Bebop" is the "futuristic misadventures and tragedies of an easygoing bounty



YouTube

This YouTube screenshot shows Senior Airman Derrick Newbold of the Air Force Band of the Pacific-Asia performing a solo for a cover version of the theme song for the Japanese anime series "Cowboy Bebop."

hunter and his partners," according to IMDb.com. "Tank!" was composed by Yoko Kanno and performed by the Seatbelts, according to cowboybebop.fandom.com, a fan website.

"It is a big band jazz piece that

goes by a Latin-infused hard bop style with a rhythm section that mixes a double bass and bongo drums," the entry states.

Other joint productions could be in the works, according to Yagi and FM Tachikawa.

"I didn't think it would go so smoothly," said Kaji of FM Tachikawa. "I guess this is what happens when individual players are highly skilled."

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Singapore sees surge in cases

Outbreak could affect US Navy logistics hub

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

More than 24,000 coronavirus cases in Singapore threaten a key Pacific logistics hub for the U.S. Navy, according to a local defense expert.

Outbreaks in dormitories for migrant workers there have catapulted the island from a nation with fewer than 600 cases through the beginning of April to the epicenter of the outbreak in Southeast Asia. Singapore's Ministry of Health announced 884 new cases Tuesday, taking the island's count to 24,671. The Straits Times newspaper reported that day.

The outbreak could affect 1,000 service members, civilians and their families in Singapore serving with Task Force 73 and Command Logistics Group Western Pacific — teams that arm, fuel, feed and support 7th Fleet operations in the region and support U.S. littoral combat ships stationed there since 2013.

Of concern are cases among Singapore's 1 million migrant workers, including 300,000 who live in congested dormitories that have been flagged as disease hot spots, said Ian Chong, an assistant professor in the National University of Singapore's political science department.

"Migrant workers are employed in shipbuilding and repair facilities used by the U.S. Navy," he said.

The Sembawang district, home to several shipyards as well as the Task Force 73 headquarters, is frequented by many migrant workers, Chong said.

"Some Navy ships go to Changi [Naval Base] but those that need work go to Sembawang. Asymptomatic workers could bring the disease aboard ships," he said but noted that the Navy's littoral combat ships berth at Changi and likely wouldn't be impacted.

Singaporean authorities have isolated sick workers in their dormitories and moved others to barracks on military bases to relieve congested living conditions, Chong said.

"They are actively trying to keep these barracks separate from everyone else," he said.

The outbreak among migrant workers could mean U.S. warships visiting Singapore — a transit point for warships challenging Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea — might not get certain kinds of work done or work might be slowed, Chong said.

"If the U.S. wants to continue with deployments it will have to think about it because there are maintenance and other needs," he said.

Singaporeans have monitored news about the outbreak aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt, which caused that aircraft carrier to divert to Guam on March 26. About a month later, more than 1,150 Roosevelt sailors had tested positive for the virus and many were moved off the ship and isolated in local hotels.

"The situation with the Roosevelt shows there is some difficulty in maintaining a ship and what to do when there is an outbreak onboard," he said.

Chong questioned what would happen if a ship arrived in Singa-



TRISTIN BARTIN/U.S. NAVY

Operations Specialist 2nd Class Eric Del Rio, assigned to the littoral combat ship USS Montgomery, stands lookout as the ship arrives at Changi Naval Base, Singapore, on July 6. A surge in virus cases in Singapore threatens a key Pacific logistics hub for the U.S. Navy.

por carrying infected sailors.

"There would definitely be a lot of concern," he said. "We are trying to fight to prevent our medical system becoming overwhelmed. We are just managing to keep things together. If you had a carrier with 5,000 people that came it could be very messy diplomatically as well as medically."

The Navy will not release details of coronavirus cases among its forces in Singapore, Lt. Cmdr. Sean Riordan, a spokesman for Task Force 73 and Command Logistics Group Western Pacific, said in emailed answers to questions Tuesday.

"We won't be providing updates by specific location or command," he said.

The Navy in Singapore has been taking conservative measures such as maximizing telework to prevent the spread of coronavirus among its forces there, Riordan said.

dan said.

"We have also stressed the basics: good hand washing, physical distancing, and taking appropriate actions if feeling sick ... our personnel here are required to wear masks any time outside their homes, maintain social distancing, and actively monitor themselves for even mild symptoms," he said.

The Navy has limited access and occupancy in its gym and exchange store, prohibited outdoor and group activities and restricted food service to take out only on the island, he said.

The Navy is also offering mental health, stress management and religious resources to mitigate potential negative effects of social isolation during stay-home periods, Riordan said.

"This is not business as usual," he said. "On board our ships, we are enforcing social

distancing, minimizing group gatherings, wearing [personal protective equipment], and cleaning extensively."

Quarterdeck watch standers are screening anyone who walks on board Navy ships and referring sailors and civilian mariners with symptoms for medical evaluation, he said.

"For our logistics fleet, we are following U.S. Pacific Fleet's guidance instructing Navy vessels to remain at sea for at least 14 days in order to monitor Sailors and civilian mariners for any symptoms of the coronavirus," he said.

All Military Sealift Command ships manned by civilian mariners took early preventive measures enabling the Navy to continue supplying warships at sea, Riordan added.

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Army cancels summer cadet training for ROTC students

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Army will not send ROTC cadets to Fort Knox, Ky., this summer amid the coronavirus pandemic, halting annual training camps aimed at preparing them to shift from college students to second lieutenants, the service's ROTC chief announced Tuesday.

Top service officials spent weeks analyzing how to safely move some 10,000 ROTC cadets across the nation to and from the Army post to conduct basic and advanced summer training courses, said Maj. Gen. John Evans, who is in charge of U.S. Army Cadet Command. Ultimately, Evans determined the Army could not risk the potential of sparking a virus outbreak in the camp and

sending infected students back to more than 900 college campuses for their fall semesters.

"We were concerned that if the worst were to happen, we might send out a large group of cadets that might be carrying the infection ... they may even be asymptomatic — back out into their college populations," Evans told reporters Tuesday during a news briefing. "We felt that risk ... was just too great."

The Army, instead, will turn to increased training requirements for its ROTC cadets to complete during their academic year, including expanding required field training exercises each school year from a 48-hour event conducted the weekend to a 96-hour event that will require them to miss some classroom

time.

Evans was scheduled to host a virtual town hall with his ROTC cadets via social media Wednesday to detail the changes, he said.

It is not an ideal solution, Evans admitted. But he suspected universities would cooperate, and the command is reaching out directly to those schools to ask for their understanding and leniency on cadets who miss time in class.

The Army relies heavily on its ROTC program, which accounts for some 70 percent of the Army's new officers commissioned into the service each year.

The Fort Knox training programs are considered paramount for cadets' military education. During the summer months, the post sees rotations of about 700 cadet classes come through the

basic and advanced camps for more than 30 days at a time.

The basic camp is for freshmen cadets or sophomores who started late in the ROTC program and introduces them to Army life. Cadets typically attend the advanced camp in the summer between

their junior and senior years. It tests their preparedness to enter the Army, assessing a variety of skills including their fitness levels, weapons proficiency, military tactics, and land navigation.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK



REED SAXON/AP

Los Angeles police investigators work the scene of a fatal shooting in the Crenshaw District of LA.

Cold cases getting colder as pandemic wears on

By STEFANIE DIAZO
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Cold cases are getting colder. Detectives are struggling to connect with victims through thick masks, and investigators accustomed to wearing plainclothes are digging out their dusty uniforms for patrol duty as the coronavirus pandemic rages.

Police departments nationwide are grappling with changes that the virus has wrought on their investigations, even as law enforcement agencies report major decreases in crime due to stay-at-home orders. Authorities have said that enough wrangling about to keep police busy, and detective work must still be in-person and hands-on, despite COVID-19. Evidence has to be collected, statements must be taken in person and death notifications need to be made face-to-face.

"You put on gloves, you put on masks and you've still got to go out there and do it," said Los Angeles Police Capt. Jonathan Tippet, head of the elite Robbery-Homicide Division.

Police around the country have to put some investigations on hold as they detail detectives to help out with social distance patrols, or cover for their colleagues out sick with COVID-19.

It's worrisome to former New York Police Department Sgt. Joe Giacalone, who is concerned about criminals across the country who will go undetected in the meantime.

"That becomes a bigger problem down the road," Giacalone, a former cold case detective now a professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. "Investigators prevent further victimization by getting these guys off the streets."

Despite fewer detectives in bureaus, police are finding workarounds, and high-profile cases are still getting the necessary attention. The Los Angeles district attorney filed an additional

sexual assault charge against disgraced film mogul Harvey Weinstein in April and investigators in New York continue to delve into an unsolved Long Island serial killer case after they revealed new evidence earlier this year.

In some cases, like cyber or financial crime, interviews can be transitioned to the phone to preserve social distancing. But for others, such as sexual abuse, in-person interviews are a necessity.

For traumatized children who need to be comforted, Los Angeles County sheriff's detectives give "air hugs" and teach the kids phrases like "I love you" in sign language to overcome the impersonal nature of masks and social distancing.

"They'll do anything they can to make these kids and these victims feel safe," said Carlos Marquez, a detective division commander in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

Detectives elsewhere have been forced to investigate crimes that are outside their normal specialties. In the hardest-hit part of New Jersey, investigators in the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office have been moved out of their individual squads — such as narcotics or sex crimes — into "one big detective bureau."

That bureau is now made up of three mixed 35-person platoons, which work from home part of the time. The goal is to avoid an entire specialty squad contracting — or spreading — the virus and leaving the office without an important skill set. "We can't have the homicide squad coming in and out of the building left and right, infecting people," Chief of Detectives Robert Anzilotti said.

The Bergen detectives are trying to limit extra work that would require bringing more people into headquarters. If a crime is caught on video, there's less of a need to have a specialist analyze the per-

petrator's cellphone in a digital forensic lab as an additional step, Anzilotti said.

"We're being more than thorough enough to make sure we sustain a conviction," he said. "If the phone needs to get dumped, it's getting dumped."

The coronavirus may also be indirectly responsible for more overdose deaths, investigators say.

One of the main supply chains for the chemicals to make methamphetamine and fentanyl is in Wuhan, China, the epicenter of the global outbreak. As a result, police in Suffolk County, N.Y., believe that suppliers are cutting narcotics with agents like fentanyl to make their inventory last longer, according to Gerard Gigante, chief of detectives for the Suffolk County police.

The county's nonfatal suspected opioid overdoses spiked 69% between March 15 and April 12, as compared to the same time last year.

In Arkansas, which does not have a stay-at-home order, Cleburne County Sheriff Chris Brown said that his deputies are not responding to lower-level crimes such as theft and property damage. Instead, they're doing interviews over the phone and asking the victims to document the incident.

"Email me the pictures and we'll take a report for you," he's instructed his deputies to tell residents.

His office is still executing a couple of search warrants a week and conducting raids on suspected drug dealers' homes — the county's drug of choice is methamphetamine — but deputies are working with Cleburne health officials to make sure that a target's house has not been exposed to the virus.

"If the drug dealers haven't slowed down," he said, "we feel like we can't let them run rampant."

CDC documents stress plans for more flareups

By JASON DEAREN
AND MIKE STOBBE
Associated Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Advice from the nation's top disease control experts on how to safely reopen businesses and institutions in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic included detailed instructive guidance and some more restrictive measures than the plan released by the White House last month. The guidance, which was shelved by Trump administration officials, also offered recommendations to help communities decide when to shut facilities down again during future flareups of COVID-19.

The Associated Press obtained a 63-page document that is more detailed than other, previously reported segments of the shelved guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It shows how the thinking of the CDC infection control experts differs from those in the White House managing the pandemic response.

The White House's "Opening Up America Again" plan that was released April 17 included some of the CDC's approach, but made clear that the onus for reopening decisions was solely on state governors and local officials.

By contrast, the organizational tool created by the CDC advocates for a coordinated national response to give community leaders step-by-step instructions to "help Americans re-enter civic life," with the idea that there would be resurgences of the virus and lots of customization needed. The White House said last week that the document was a draft and not ready for release.

It contains the kinds of specifics that officials need to make informed decisions, some experts said.

"The White House is pushing for reopening, but the truth of the matter is the White House has just not had a comprehensive plan where all the pieces fit. They're doing it piecemeal," said Dr. Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association.

Such detailed advice should have been available much earlier, said Stephen Morse, a Columbia University expert on the spread of diseases.

"Many different places are considering how to safely develop return-to-work procedures. Having more guidance on that earlier on might have been more reassuring to people. And it might have prevented some cases," Morse said.

From the start, CDC staffers working on the guidance were uncomfortable tying it specifically to reopening, and voiced their objections to the White House officials tasked with approving the guidance for release, according to a CDC official granted anonymity because they were not cleared to speak with the press.

The CDC's detailed guidance was eventually shelved by the administration April 30, according to internal government emails and CDC sources who were granted anonymity because they were not cleared to speak to the press. After The AP reported about the burying of the guidance last week, the White House asked the CDC to revive parts of it, which were sent back for approval, according to emails and interviews.

On Tuesday, CDC Director Robert Redfield testified before a U.S. Senate committee that the recommendations would be released "soon," but provided no further details. Government emails show that Redfield had repeatedly sought White House approval for CDC's guidance, starting as early as April 10.

Both the CDC document and the White House's published plan recommend that communities reopen in phases as local cases of the coronavirus subside.

One of many differences, however, is advice for when communities should allow for the resumption of nonessential travel.

The shelved CDC guide advises communities to avoid all nonessential travel in phases of reopening until the last one, when cases are at the lowest levels. Even then, the CDC is cautious and advises only a "consideration" of the resumption of nonessential travel after 42 continuous days of declining cases of COVID-19.

The White House plan, by contrast, recommends that communities "minimize" travel in Phase 1, and that in Phase 2, after 28 consecutive days of decline, "Nonessential travel can resume."

As of Tuesday, CDC's webpage on travel guidance during the pandemic still linked to the White House plan. The stricter guidance is not there.

Another stark difference in the final White House plan and that designed by epidemiologists at the CDC is the latter's acknowledgement that COVID-19 cases will likely surge after states reopen, and that local governments need to continuously monitor their communities closely.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Items for vets, VA workers in House stimulus

BY NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Support for homeless veterans, hazard pay for Department of Veterans Affairs employees and expanded medical and mental health care for vets and service members are included in a \$3 trillion stimulus bill introduced by House Democrats on Tuesday.

The 1,815-page legislation, which at \$3 trillion would be the largest relief package in U.S. history, was criticized by House Republicans as a “liberal wish list” that had no chance of becoming law. Some of its central elements are to distribute another round of direct payments to Americans, send more funding to state and local governments and tribal nations, and boost coronavirus testing and contact tracing.

The Health Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act, known as the HEROES Act, could be scheduled for a vote as soon as Friday and is likely to pass the Democratic-controlled House. However, the legislation is likely to face barriers in the Senate. Senate Republicans have indicated that not enough time has passed since the \$2 trillion CARES Act to consider another

relief package.

Included in the massive bill are several measures aimed at supporting veterans and VA employees who have been affected by the pandemic.

The package would establish a \$200 billion “Heroes Fund” to provide hazard pay to essential workers, including VA medical staff. The American Federation of Government Employees, which represents thousands of VA workers, criticized the VA on Tuesday for not providing hazard pay.

The department faced a shortage of personal protective equipment for weeks, leading hospitals to ration their supplies of masks. VA nurses across the country openly protested their unsafe working conditions. As of Tuesday, 1,324 employees had contracted the coronavirus and 28 had died from it.

“All front-line employees who have been or could have been exposed to Covid-19 while on the job and were not provided the proper protective equipment — at any point during this pandemic — deserve hazard pay,” the federation’s president, Everett Kelley, said in a statement.

In a statement to ABC News, VA press secretary Christina Noel said, “Hazard pay is to com-

The package would establish a \$200 billion “Heroes Fund” to provide hazard pay to essential workers, including VA medical staff.

pensate employees when risks cannot be reasonably mitigated and employees cannot be safely protected, and that is the opposite of the current environment at VA.”

In addition to hazard pay, the HEROES Act would ensure VA medical workers receive paid sick leave if they’re exposed to the virus or become infected. Support for homeless veterans was also included in the bill, which would allocate funding for the VA to provide transportation, food, shelter, phones, clothing, blankets and toiletry items to homeless veterans. Under the legislation, the department would be allowed to establish temporary shelters in the parking lots of VA medical centers.

The bill also aims to get homeless veterans into permanent housing. According to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, those veterans who received housing vouchers from the government before the coronavirus pandemic but had not yet rented homes have been unable to find housing. Employees at local housing authorities are working from home and are unable to complete the inspections that are required before veterans can move into their rental units. Many landlords have also closed their offices.

The HEROES Act would shorten the bureaucratic process of getting veterans into permanent housing during the pandemic. Housing authorities would be allowed to administer vouchers electronically and forgo in-person inspections.

The stimulus package included several other measures for veterans. It would order the VA to treat all veterans who lost their employer-sponsored health insurance because of the pandemic. According to the latest data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, veteran unemployment rose from 3.5% in March to nearly 12% in April, and more than 1 million veterans filed for jobless benefits.

The bill would also expand

mental health care to members of the National Guard and Reserve who deployed in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Those service members would become eligible for counseling through the VA’s Vet Centers.

The VA would be ordered to suspend any debt collection efforts for 60 days after the end of the national emergency. The agency would also be required to extend deadlines for veterans’ claims and appeals until after the national emergency has ended.

The bill aims to increase the amount of money that goes to housebound veterans to help them pay for in-home assistance. The benefit would increase by up to 25%, and the VA would supply those veterans and caregivers with personal protective equipment.

“The Heroes Act is critical,” said Rep. Mark Takano, D-Calif., the chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. “By supporting homeless veterans, suspending debt collection, expanding health coverage, and caring for our most vulnerable, we can help ensure that those who have served our country have an opportunity to succeed.”

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

US investigators uncover wave of fraud

By ALAN SUDERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A 39-year-old former investment manager in Georgia was already facing federal charges that he robbed hundreds of retirees of their savings through a Ponzi scheme when the rapid spread of COVID-19 presented an opportunity.

Christopher A. Parris started pitching himself as a broker of surgical masks amid the nationwide scramble for protective equipment in those first desperate weeks of the outbreak, federal authorities said. Within weeks, Parris was making millions of dollars on sales orders.

Except there were no masks. Law enforcement officials said that Parris is part of what they are calling a wave of fraud tied to the outbreak.

Homeland Security Investigations, an arm of the Department of Homeland Security, is leading a nationwide crackdown. It has opened over 270 criminal cases and indicted 11 people so far as part of "Operation Stolen Promise," according to Matthew Albence, acting director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"It's incredibly rampant and it's growing by the day," Albence said. "We're just scraping the surface of this criminal activity."

Parris was on pretrial release for the alleged Ponzi scheme when he was arrested last month in what federal authorities said was an attempt to secure release for more than \$750 million from the Department of Veterans Affairs for 125 million face masks and other equipment.

"He was trying to sell something he didn't even have," said Jere T. Miles, the special agent in charge of the New Orleans office of Homeland Security Investigations, which worked the case with the VA Office of Inspector General. "That's just outright, blatant fraud."

Parris has not yet entered a plea to fraud charges and his lawyers said he did not respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press.

Nationwide, investigators have



These unapproved COVID-19 tests were seized on March 22 from the DHL Express Consignment Facility at JFK Airport in New York.

turned up more than false purveyors of PPE. They have uncovered an array of counterfeit or adulterated products, from COVID-19 tests kits and treatments to masks and cleaning products.

Steve Francis, director of the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center, which is overseen by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, said that authorities have tracked counterfeiters flowing into the U.S. from 20 countries and for sale through hundreds of websites.

"There are people popping up who have never been in the business of securing equipment on a large scale," Francis said.

From his home outside Atlanta, he claimed to represent a company, the Encore Health Group, that had 3M respiratory masks and other protective equipment. At the time, there was a mad scramble for supplies that pitted state and local governments against each other.

As outlined in court documents and interviews, his pitch reached

a company in Baton Rouge, La., that had previously done business with the state and was trying to help government agencies buy PPE. In late March, it contacted the VA, which was then dealing with a critical shortage of protective equipment.

The VA was suspicious of the price, about 15 times what it was paying amid the shortage, and alerted its inspector general, which brought in Homeland Security. That resulted in a sting that led to Parris.

"He had no means of producing any PPE," Albence said. "It was just a scam."

But it had some takers. Federal authorities said that a Parris-controlled bank account received more than \$74 million, with most appearing to come from unidentified entities trying to buy safety gear in March and April, according to court documents. He wired some of the money to accounts overseas, including more than \$1.1 million to a Swiss company's bank that authorities said may be a shell corporation.

The U.S. government seized more than \$3.2 million from his accounts.

The Ponzi scheme was unrelated to the alleged attempt to defraud the VA but "is sufficiently similar to the conduct in this case that it is relevant to his plan, intent, and modus operandi," according to a search warrant affidavit.

Miles said that a person running a Ponzi scheme "is a special kind of criminal to begin with," but a person "that will run a completely fraudulent scheme in the middle of a pandemic ... that rises to a whole other level of special criminal."

In the earlier case, Parris and his business partners are accused of defrauding about 1,000 people out of at least \$115 million from January 2012 to June 2018 by persuading them to turn over their savings for what turned out to be nonexistent investments, according to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Another member of the partnership, Perry Santillo, pleaded

guilty to fraud in November.

As part of the alleged scheme, Parris and the others bought the businesses of investment advisers who were retiring and leveraged the trust that those advisers had built up over the years to pitch bogus investments, with relatively modest returns, to their newly acquired clients.

Florida attorney Scott Silver, who represented some investors who sought to get their money back after the SEC shut down the operation, said that Parris and the others spent most of it, and there was little left to recover.

He wasn't surprised that Parris had been arrested in the COVID fraud case.

"He's already facing 20 years in prison," he said. "What's he worried about?"

Parris, who was charged in the case in January, grew up in Rochester, N.Y., and worked as an insurance agent, owned a dry cleaner and got involved in local politics. He ran unsuccessfully for city council and said that he was vice president of a local African American Republican committee.

"So many people that know me, you know, trust me," Parris said in a 2015 hearing with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, which later suspended his broker license.

One of Parris' alleged victims in the Ponzi scheme, Jane Naylor, said that she took guitar lessons from Parris' father, a reverend at a local church, and lost \$150,000 in the fraud.

Naylor said that she attended a hearing in federal court in New York this year and was dismayed when Parris was released on his own recognizance. When her daughter texted her the news weeks later that Parris had been charged for PPE fraud, she said that she was in complete shock, but also pleased.

"I'm ecstatic," she said. "I hope he goes to jail for life."

Parris is now jailed in Atlanta and is expected to be transferred to Washington to face charges in the VA case.

Education Department targets employers over wage garnishment

Associated Press

The U.S. Education Department said that it's ramping up efforts to contact more than 37,000 employers who have improperly continued to garnish wages from workers who have fallen behind on their student loans.

Congress ordered a temporary pause on involuntary wage collections in March, but the Education Department was sued weeks later in a class action case alleging that the agency failed to notify employers of the change. A court filing on Monday revealed that the department was still garnishing wages from about 54,000 workers as of March 7, and 37,000 were taking wages taken as of March 13.

In a statement, the department said that it has notified employers to stop garnishing wages from defaulted student loan borrowers, but some have failed to comply. The agency said that it sent letters to nearly 37,500 employers on Monday ordering them to stop, and staff are also calling employers to make sure they received the notice.

The department also sent letters to 83,500 defaulted borrowers over the weekend saying that their wages should not be garnished and explaining how they can contact their employers to halt the practice.

Federal law authorizes the Education Department to garnish

up to 15% of workers' paychecks without a court order if they go into default on federal student loan payments. The agency can issue garnishment orders to employers, and it contracts with private agencies to enforce collection. Last year, the department garnished \$842 million from workers, according to federal data.

Congress told the Education Department to halt garnishments through Sept. 30 as part of a coronavirus rescue package that was signed March 27. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos had already called for the measure days earlier and said that borrowers would be getting refunds for any wages taken since March 13.

But a class-action lawsuit filed on April 30 alleged that thousands of workers were still getting up to 15% of their paychecks held back because the department had failed to notify employers that they must stop withholding pay.

The complaint was filed by consumer and student advocacy groups on behalf of Elizabeth Barber, a New York home health aide, and any other borrowers still facing garnishments. Barber said that she makes \$13 per hour and has had 12% of her pay held back recently.

One of the groups behind the suit, Student Defense, said Monday's court filing proves that thousands of workers are still

being harmed by the department six weeks after Congress' rescue package took effect.

"For borrowers already worried about affording rent, groceries and medication, losing part of each paycheck to an unlawful garnishment is enough to push them into truly dire circumstances," said Alex Elson, senior counsel at Student Defense.

The lawsuit asks the court to order that DeVos halt wage garnishment immediately and notify borrowers when it has actually been stopped. It also demands immediate refunds for any pay that has been withheld since March 13, the day President Donald Trump declared a national emergency.

VIRUS OUTBREAK ROUNDUP

Kentucky governor says rallies send 'message of hate'

Associated Press

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Protesters upset with the pace of Kentucky's economic reopening risk accelerating the coronavirus outbreak by flouting health guidelines and sending a "message of hate" by waving Confederate flags at rallies, Gov. Andy Beshear said Tuesday.

The Democratic governor, who has shown a calm response throughout the turmoil, offered some of his harshest criticism yet of his detractors. It came the same day that a group of protesters sued him, arguing his pandemic measures infringed on their right to protest at the state Capitol.

Beshear said he supports the right of others to speak out against his actions, but said protests need to be conducted safely. Rally participants were encouraged to take off face masks and to ignore social distancing guidelines meant to contain the virus, he said at his daily briefing.

A recent rally drew hundreds of protesters to the Capitol steps. Protesters held signs calling for Beshear to "unlock Kentucky" and waved U.S. flags. Video from media outlets showed at least two Confederate flags in the crowd.

Kentucky embarked Monday on a wave of business reopenings. Auto and boat dealerships resumed in-person service. Also reopening were manufacturing, construction, office-based businesses, pet grooming and photography businesses.

The state is allowing retail to reopen May 20 and restaurants to open at a third of capacity starting May 22. Salons and tattoo parlors will reopen May 25 and fitness centers and movie theaters on June 1.

Arizona

PHOENIX — Gov. Doug Ducey said Tuesday he'll let gyms and public swimming pools reopen and will allow his stay-at-home order to expire this week as he continues easing the painful restrictions he imposed on businesses and individuals to tamp down the coronavirus outbreak.

Gyms and pools, among the last remaining facilities that have not been allowed to operate, could open their doors Wednesday if they follow recommendations from health officials. The governor also invited professional sports to resume without fans.

Ducey's stay-home order was set to expire Friday, and he said he won't renew it.

State health officials reported 20 additional COVID-19 deaths Tuesday, raising the reported total to 562. There have been at least 11,736 recorded cases since

the start of the outbreak, though the actual number of people infected is likely much higher because many with mild symptoms don't seek testing and many who did were turned away for months because of a supply shortage.

California

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Gavin Newsom moved to further ease the coronavirus choke-hold on California's economy Tuesday by allowing more businesses to reopen and following through on his promise to swiftly approve requests from counties to move ahead more quickly if they have been minimally harmed by the pandemic.

Business offices can reopen statewide with appropriate precautions if their employees cannot easily telecommute, while malls can begin offering the same outside pickup already allowed for other retailers, Newsom said. The state also offered more guidance for resuming the operation of niche businesses including car washes and pet groomers.

Meantime, seven rural Northern California counties — El Dorado, Butte, Lassen, Nevada, Placer, Amador and Shasta — that have not had a single virus death were the first to win state permission to reopen their economies more quickly.

Georgia

ATLANTA — Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp eased a few restrictions Tuesday on businesses and child care operations, but said he was keeping most current rules until at least the end of May.

The Republican governor reiterated that he believes Georgia is containing the COVID-19 respiratory illness, despite areas of concern.

Kemp said he's most encouraged by low demand for critical care hospital beds since he started loosening restrictions last month.

The number of hospitalized patients fell again Tuesday to 1,125 statewide, the lowest since the state began keeping those statistics April 8. Meanwhile, the number of ventilators in use ticked up to 884.

On Tuesday, Georgia was reporting nearly 35,000 confirmed cases overall and 1,465 confirmed deaths from the virus.

Top health experts continue to warn that loosening restrictions too quickly could spark a resurgence of infections. Kemp has captured nationwide attention with his reopening moves because they were among the earliest and most aggressive. He said Tuesday he's focused on "two battles that we're fighting right now: One, to



JOEL MARTINEZ, THE (McAllen, Texas) MONITOR/AP

Salvador Guadarrama provides a farmworker a hand-sewn mask in a field as they prepare for watermelon harvest in Edinburg, Texas, on Tuesday.

stop the spread of COVID-19, and No. 2, the economic battle that we're in to bring our economy back in our state."

Nevada

LAS VEGAS — The casino workers' Culinary Union planned to hold a protest drive up the Las Vegas Strip Tuesday evening to call for casino companies to re-evaluate their reopening plans and to adopt the union's recommended safety protocols.

The union has called for casinos to publicly release the detailed plans they are submitting to gambling regulators laying out how they plan to safely reopen when Nevada allows it. Gov. Steve Sisolak shuttered the properties in mid-March to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

The governor said he's allowing the Nevada Gaming Control Board to have the final say on when casinos can reopen.

The Nevada Gaming Control Board and the Nevada Gaming Commission, which is considered the final authority on regulations and licensing, approved rules that will require casinos to limit customers, keep gamblers spaced apart and disinfect dice, cards and all other surfaces upon reopening.

The union wants more extensive proposals, including testing staff for COVID-19 and screening people, including guests, with temperature checks upon entry.

New Hampshire

CONCORD — Officials in a New Hampshire town near the Massachusetts state line have been considering an ordinance that would make wearing a face mask mandatory indoors in a public space.

The proposed ordinance in Salem would require anyone over age 2 to wear some type of face covering, or face up to a \$200 fine.

The board of selectmen discussed the matter during a virtual meeting Monday, but didn't vote on it.

As of Monday, 3,160 people in New Hampshire had tested positive for the virus, an increase of 89 from the previous day. There have been at least 133 coronavirus-related deaths in the state.

Oregon

PORTLAND — Oregon workplace safety regulators cited an Oregon food processor for unsafe practices after nearly three dozen of its employees tested positive for the coronavirus.

The \$2,000 penalty against National Frozen Foods in Albany appears to be the first since Gov. Kate Brown ordered businesses to ensure distancing between workers, the Democrat-Herald reported. The food manufacturer had employees standing as close as 2 feet apart, rather than 6 feet, as ordered by Brown.

National Frozen Foods has 30 days to appeal the citation.

The citation from Oregon OSHA stems from an inspection starting April 20 in response to complaints about the facility.

Additionally, several workers at Pacific Seafood's plant in Warrenton have tested positive for the coronavirus, the second seafood processor on the northern Oregon coast with an outbreak, the Astorian reported.

Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania's top prosecutor has opened criminal investigations into several nursing homes amid a coronavirus outbreak that has killed 2,600 residents of nursing homes and other facilities that care for older adults, more than two-thirds of the state's death toll, his office announced Tuesday.

The attorney general's office did not say how many facilities it is investigating or reveal their names or provide any other details about the specific allegations. In general, the attorney general's office has jurisdiction in manners of criminal neglect.

The virus has sickened about 12,000 residents of 540 nursing and personal care homes, ac-

counting for about one-fifth of the state's confirmed infections, according to the Health Department. The National Guard has been deployed to more than a dozen homes with severe outbreaks.

The Pennsylvania National Guard says some personnel are sick with COVID-19, including those who contracted the virus while deployed.

Guard spokesman Lt. Col. Keith Hickox said his agency has helped 13 long-term care facilities in response to the pandemic.

It's nearly impossible to know how the Guard troops became sick, he said, describing the total number as relatively low, considering what they have been doing.

Washington

OLYMPIA — More than 1,300 people in Washington state have been trained and are ready to work with local health departments to do contact tracing once a case of the coronavirus has been confirmed in a county.

At a news conference Tuesday, Gov. Jay Inslee said that of those already trained, 351 are from the National Guard, 390 are from the Department of Licensing and 630 are state or local health professionals. He said that number could be expanded even more in the coming weeks.

Inslee said that while the social distancing efforts that have been in place since March have been frustrating, they have been "significantly effective."

"Now as we attempt to transition to open back up our economy, we are simultaneously moving to this second initiative of testing, contact tracing and isolation," he said.

More than 17,300 people in Washington state have tested positive for the virus and at least 962 have died.

Inslee's announcement about the trained contact tracers comes as eight counties have been given approval to relax some COVID-19 stay-at-home restrictions early as the state moves through a four-stage reopening process.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Summer travel debated; new clusters popping up

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — New coronavirus clusters have popped up as nations struggle to balance reopening economies with preventing a second wave of infections and deaths, while in Europe, a debate erupted Wednesday over the summer travel season.

Authorities in the Chinese city of Wuhan, where the pandemic first began late last year, reportedly were pressing ahead Wednesday to test all 11 million residents within 10 days after a handful of new infections were found.

In Lebanon, authorities reinstated a nationwide lockdown for four days beginning Wednesday night after a spike in reported infections and complaints from officials that social distancing rules were being ignored.

Despite the risks that loosening restrictions could lead to infection spikes, European nations have been seeking to restart cross-border travel, particularly as the summer holiday season looms for countries whose economies rely on tourism.

The European Union unveiled a plan to help citizens across its 27 nations salvage their summer vacations and resurrect Europe's badly battered tourism industry after months of coronavirus lockdowns. The pandemic has prompted border closures across Europe and shut down its lifeline

of cheap local flights.

The EU's executive arm, the European Commission, laid out its advice for lifting ID checks on hastily closed borders, helping to get airlines, ferries and buses running while ensuring the safety of passengers and crew, and preparing health measures for hotels to reassure citizens.

It's not clear whether EU nations will follow that advice, since they, not Brussels, have the final say over health and security matters.

Some European countries have sought bilateral agreements with their neighbors.

Austria said its border with Germany would reopen fully on June 15 and border checks would be reduced starting Friday. Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said Austria was aiming for similar agreements with Switzerland, Liechtenstein and its eastern neighbors "as long as the infection figures allow."

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said his country will lift a blanket warning against foreign travel to European destinations before other places, such as Asia or North America, but didn't specify when. Germany's warning against all non-essential tourist travel abroad runs until June 14.

"It will certainly be possible to lift the travel warning earlier for Europe than for other desti-

nations — so long as the current positive trend in many countries solidifies," Maas said. "Freedom to travel is part of the foundation of the European project, but in times of corona, Europe must ensure more: the freedom to travel safely."

The border shutdowns have hit the European travel industry hard. The Germany-based tour and hotel operator TUI said Wednesday it expects to cut thousands of jobs due to the pandemic.

TUI said it was "prepared for a resumption" and its first hotels on the German coast would reopen in the coming days. It also envisioned offering holidays in Spain's Balearic islands and in Greece starting in July, the German news agency dpa reported.

As long as new infections remain relatively low, there is "no reason why one shouldn't be able to travel there," TUI CEO Fritz Jousseen said — but local companies and hotels need to be open.

Norway said Wednesday it was opening its borders to EU citizens who have a residence there or have family they want to visit, seasonal workers and people from the U.K., Iceland and Liechtenstein.

The tensions in balancing people's safety from the virus against the severe economic fallout are playing out across the world. Italy partially lifted lockdown restric-



DMITRI LOVETSKY/AP

People wearing face masks to protect against coronavirus wait to cross a street past a billboard showing a doctor in St. Petersburg, Russia, on Wednesday.

tions last week only to see a big jump in confirmed coronavirus cases in its hardest-hit region. Pakistan reported 2,000 new infections in a single day after crowds crammed into local markets as restrictions were eased.

China, the first nation to put a large number of citizens under lockdown and the first to ease those restrictions, has been strictly guarding against any resurgence. In January, it put Wuhan and the surrounding region, home to more than 50 million people, under a strict lockdown. A cluster of six new cases recently emerged, the first local infections in Wuhan since before the lockdown was eased in early April.

Worldwide, the virus has infected more than 4.2 million people and killed 292,000, according to the Johns Hopkins tally. Experts say the actual numbers are likely far higher.

Southern Africa's tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho confirmed its first COVID-19 case Wednesday, the last African country to report

an infection.

Elsewhere, there was progress. New Zealand reported no new cases Wednesday for the second consecutive day, and Thailand's health authorities also reported no new confirmed cases for the first time in more than two months, and no new deaths. Restaurants in Bangkok were allowed to reopen last week under social distancing rules.

Japan was considering partially lifting its nationwide state of emergency ahead of its scheduled May 31 expiry date amid signs of slowing infections.

Prime Minister Abe Shinzo says he will make an decision after consulting with a panel of experts before his announcement Thursday.

Japanese media said the state of emergency was expected to be lifted in more than 30 prefectures where new cases have decreased. Restrictions will remain in Tokyo and its neighboring areas as well as Osaka, where medical systems are still under pressure.

As Europe reopens, key virus protections are still elusive

Associated Press

ROME — Italy's virus reopening was supposed to be accompanied by a series of measures to limit infections in the one-time epicenter of Europe's pandemic: the distribution of millions of inexpensive surgical masks to pharmacies nationwide, a pilot project of 150,000 antibody tests and, eventually, the roll-out of a contact-tracing app.

None of these is in place as Italy experiments with its second week of loosening restrictions and looks ahead to Monday's reopening of shops and, in some regions, bars and restaurants.

Italy's commissioner for the emergency, Domenico Arcuri, went on the defensive Tuesday to respond to mounting criticism of his Phase II roll-out. He insisted "Italians know well what to do" to protect themselves, even if they don't have the tests, masks, contact-tracing or other measures that public health authorities deemed necessary for Italy to reopen in safety.

"Sometimes I make mistakes for which I expect criticism and, if necessary, reprimand, from Italians," Arcuri said. But he directed the blame at others and repeated that he was working solely in the public's interest.

Italy is by no means alone in emerging from lockdown without all its infection-prevention pillars in place. And no country has had a blueprint for managing either the COVID-19 outbreak or the reopening phase.

But Italy's problems epitomize the challenges many countries face as they seek to balance economic and health care needs while reassuring terrified citizens with promises that perhaps were overly optimistic.

France's pledge to "protect, test and trace" all those who come into contact with a coronavirus patient was dealt a setback Monday when the constitutional court

threw out part of its new virus law. The court objected to the contact-tracing language and ordered the government to take extreme care in protecting privacy.

The law, which took effect Tuesday, calls for teams of health care workers to trace the contacts of COVID-19 patients and share that data on a government server, with or without the patients' consent.

French President Emmanuel Macron has also repeatedly pledged that France would be able to test up to 700,000 people per week. The national health authority told The Associated Press on Tuesday that France was av-

eraging around 200,000-270,000 tests per week.

Britain, which has Europe's highest official death toll at over 32,700, has ramped up its testing from 5,000 a day in March to close to 100,000 a day now. But it abandoned contact tracing after the virus' spread overwhelmed its capacity. A contact-tracing app is in trial stages and 18,000 people are being recruited to do the tracing legwork now.

Spain, which like Italy was among the hardest-hit countries early on, is still ironing out protocols for contact tracing and has no immediate plans to roll out an app.

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STARS AND STRIPES

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Manafort released from prison due to virus concerns

By MICHAEL BALSAMO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Paul Manafort, Donald Trump's one-time presidential campaign chairman who was convicted as part of the special counsel's Russia investigation, has been released from federal prison to serve the rest of his sentence in home confinement due to concerns about the coronavirus, his lawyer said Wednesday.

Manafort, 71, was released Wednesday morning from FCI Loretto, a low-security prison in Pennsylvania, according to his at-



Manafort

torney Todd Blanche. Manafort had been serving more than seven years in prison following his conviction. His lawyers had asked the Bureau of Prisons to release him to home confinement, arguing that he was at high risk for coronavirus because of his age and preexisting medical conditions. Manafort was hospitalized

in December after suffering from a heart-related condition, two people familiar with the matter told The Associated Press at the time. They were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

Manafort was among the first people to be charged in special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation, which examined possible coordination between the Trump campaign and Russia in the 2016 election campaign.

Manafort, who was prosecuted in two federal courts, was convicted by a jury in federal court in

Virginia in 2018 and later pleaded guilty in Washington. He was sentenced last March and was immediately hit with state charges in New York that could put him outside the president's power to pardon. New York prosecutors have accused him of giving false information on a mortgage loan application.

Manafort's release comes as prison advocates and congressional leaders have been pressing the Justice Department for weeks to release at-risk inmates ahead of a potential outbreak. They argue that the public health guidance to stay 6 feet away from

other people is nearly impossible behind bars.

Attorney General William Barr ordered the Bureau of Prisons in March and April to increase the use of home confinement and expedite the release of eligible high-risk inmates, beginning at three prisons identified as coronavirus hot spots. There are no confirmed coronavirus cases at FCI Loretto.

As of Tuesday, 2,818 federal inmates and 262 BOP staff members had positive test results for COVID-19 at federal prisons across the country. Fifty inmates had died.

Powell warns of a possible sustained recession from pandemic

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell is warning of the threat of a prolonged recession resulting from the coronavirus outbreak and is urging Congress and the White House to act further to prevent long-lasting economic damage.

The Fed and Congress have taken far-reaching steps to try to counter what is likely to be a severe downturn resulting from the widespread shutdown of the U.S. economy. But Powell warns that there still could be widespread bankruptcies among small business and extended unemployment for many people.

"Deeper and longer recessions

can leave behind lasting damage to the productive capacity of the economy," the chairman says in prepared remarks before an online discussion with the Peterson Institute for International Economics. "Avoidable household and business insolvencies can weigh on growth for years to come."

The U.S. government "ought to do what we can to avoid these out-

comes, and that may require additional policy measures," Powell says.

He says the Fed will "continue to use our tools to their fullest" until the viral outbreak subsides but gives no hint of what the Fed's next steps might be.

Powell repeats his previous warnings that the Fed can lend money to solvent companies to

help carry them through the crisis. But a longer downturn could threaten to bankrupt previously healthy companies without more help from the government.

Greater support from government spending or tax policies "could be costly, but worth it if it helps avoid long-term economic damage and leaves us with a stronger recovery," he says.

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NATION



JUSTIN WAN, LINCOLN (NEB.) JOURNAL STAR/AP

Election clerk Tom Becker disinfects a voting booth during the Nebraska primary election in Lincoln, Neb., on Tuesday.

Nebraska voters avoid polls, shatter state mail-in record

By GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Nebraska's primary voters mostly steered clear of polling sites Tuesday while shattering the state record for absentee voting with nearly 400,000 mail-in ballots in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

Republican President Donald Trump and presumptive Democratic challenger Joe Biden sailed to easy victories in the election, the first in-person primary since a heavily criticized election in Wisconsin five weeks ago. So did Republican U.S. Sen. Ben Sasse, who faced a GOP primary challenge because of his previous

criticism of Trump.

In a closely watched Democratic primary for an Omaha-based congressional district, voters chose progressive Kara Eastman over a more conservative candidate. Eastman will once again face Republican Rep. Don Bacon, as she did in 2018.

Officials had encouraged people to vote by mail, though Republican Gov. Pete Ricketts and Secretary of State Bob Evnen both pledged to forge ahead with an in-person primary even though many other states have rescheduled theirs or switched to all-mail voting. Voters easily broke the previous mail-in voting record of around 70,000 in 2018, which

includes people who requested early ballots and voters in early rural counties who receive them automatically.

Polling sites in the Omaha suburb of Papillion reported lower in-person turnout than normal. At First Lutheran Church, voters who walked into the basement polling station had plenty of space to cast their ballots.

Douglas County Election Commissioner Brian Kruse, who oversees polling sites in Omaha, said that in-person turnout was unusually low. He said that overall turnout was still strong because of the huge number of mail-in ballots received, but polls saw very few in-person voters.

Dems get OK to plan for virtual convention

Associated Press

Democrats are making new moves toward a virtual presidential nominating convention this August, with a top party committee voting Tuesday to grant convention organizers in Milwaukee the authority to design an event that won't require delegates to attend in person amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The Democratic National Committee's influential Rules & Bylaws Committee approved a plan that party Chairman Tom Perez said gives organizers "the tools necessary to adapt and plan" for a gathering and "ensure that every delegate is able to accomplish their official business without

putting their own health at risk — whether that be participating in person or by other means to allow for social distancing."

Under the resolution, the convention committee will be able to determine the final dates, along with its "format, voting mechanisms, structure and other logistical aspects." The proposal now goes to the full DNC membership, with the body expected to approve it in a mail ballot.

The expected action underscores how deeply COVID-19 has upended the 2020 presidential election, potentially forcing one or both major parties to dramatically alter their conventions in ways that not even the Civil War required in 1864. And it raises the

possibility even further that Joe Biden will be nominated as his party's standard-bearer without the traditional roll call vote from thousands of delegates across 57 U.S. states and territories.

"Our number one proposal is for the health and safety of the American people," Perez said, emphasizing that final decisions haven't been made.

The resolution would also allow two of the most high-profile convention committees — the Rules Committee and the Credentials Committee — to conduct business without having their final reports approved by the full convention, a maneuver that could minimize some floor fights.

Trump-backed candidate wins in Wis. special vote

By SCOTT BAUER
Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. — Tom Tiffany, a state senator endorsed by President Donald Trump, easily won a special congressional election Tuesday in a heavily conservative, rural Wisconsin district, cheering Republicans even as Democrats argued that the victory revealed vulnerabilities for the president among his base.

Tiffany's win over Democratic Tricia Zunker in northern Wisconsin's 7th District comes in the state's second election amid the coronavirus pandemic the past five weeks. Tiffany will replace former reality TV star Sean Duffy, a Republican who retired in September. The district has been vacant since Duffy's retirement.

In 2016, Trump won Wisconsin by less than a point, but carried the district by 20 points. Tiffany's win over Zunker was about six points less than that, based on preliminary results. Tiffany rejected Democrats' argument that the smaller margin was a sign that Trump's support was waning.

"Any time you lose by 14 points, I don't think that's a moral victory," Tiffany said. "This is a decisive victory here."

The win is in a district that Trump was not expected to win again

win big if he hopes to again carry Wisconsin. Tiffany's big victory also helps to erase the taste of a loss by a conservative Wisconsin Supreme Court justice in last month's election, a race that boosted Democrats' confidence.

"Tonight was a win for President Trump and Tom Tiffany that demonstrates the enthusiasm behind our president across Wisconsin," said Trump campaign spokeswoman Anna Kelly.

Wisconsin Democratic Party spokeswoman Courtney Beyer said that the results showed a drastic swing for Democrats, despite the margin of Zunker's loss.

"For Trump to win reelection, red areas have to get redder to balance out blue areas getting bluer," she said.

Zunker said that the race "laid the groundwork for this seat to turn blue in November."

Zunker, president of the Wausau School Board, was trying to become the first Native American from Wisconsin elected to Congress. She pulled in big-name endorsements including Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, but the numbers were against her. The district has been under Republican control since 2011 and was redistricted to more heavily favor Republicans.

GOP on cusp of retaking California House seat

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A former Navy combat pilot built a double-digit lead in the fight for an open U.S. House seat north of Los Angeles, positioning Republicans to capture a Democratic-held congressional district in California for the first time in over 20 years.

Political rookie Mike Garcia had a 12-point edge Tuesday over Democratic Assemblywoman Christy Smith in the special election for the swing 25th District. An unknown number of ballots remained uncounted and Los Angeles County, where most of them are located, wasn't expected to update tallies again until Friday.

California routinely counts large numbers of votes after election day, and mail ballots can arrive as late as Friday and still be counted as long as they were postmarked by Tuesday.

A Garcia win would provide a Cat in the Hat for the state's beleaguered GOP, which

has been drifting toward obscurity in California for years.

The contest took on outsized importance as the only competitive House race in the country in the midst of the coronavirus crisis. It's seen nationally as a proxy vote on President Donald Trump's leadership and a possible harbinger for November elections.

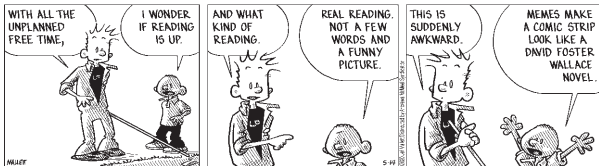
An incomplete tally showed Garcia with about 56% of the vote, with 143,000 ballots counted.

Virtually all voters were expected to mail in ballots because of the virus outbreak, though a sprinkling of polling places were available for those who wanted to vote in person.

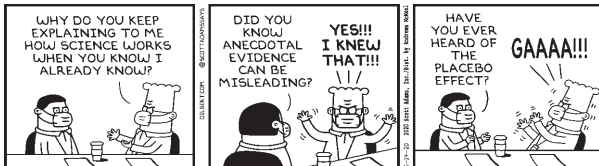
Garcia stopped short of claiming victory in a conference call with supporters after the polls closed, but said that "things are looking very encouraging."

In a statement, Smith thanked her supporters and said that she was looking forward "to seeing a thorough counting of the remaining ballots."

Frazz



Dilbert



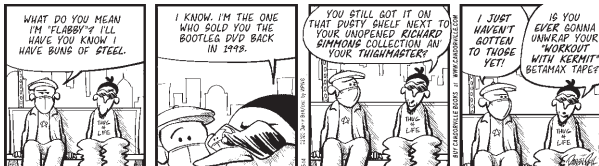
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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ACROSS

- 1 "Legally Blonde" role
- 5 Gator's kin
- 9 Boom times
- 12 Former queen of Jordan
- 13 Verdi opera
- 14 Word of denial
- 15 Australia
- 17 Playable
- 18 Braces (oneself)
- 19 Critic Roger
- 21 Ave. crossover
- 22 Early Mongolian
- 24 Datum
- 27 Moo — pork
- 28 Scored 100 on 31 Buckeyes' sch.
- 32 Corral
- 33 Ms. Thurman
- 34 "Little Women" sister

- 36 Astern
- 37 Molecule part
- 38 Overcooked
- 40 Harris or Asner
- 41 Extra
- 43 Broken arm supports
- 47 Varnish ingredient
- 48 Retreats
- 51 Annoy
- 52 Sci-fi race
- 53 Region

DOWN

- 1 Termini subgenre
- 2 Booty
- 3 Actor Rob
- 4 Papa Hemingway
- 5 Six-pack units
- 6 Abolish
- 7 Poetic tribute
- 8 Insertion mark
- 9 Charge much less than
- 10 Serve beer
- 11 Editor's "keep it"
- 16 Last (Abbr.)
- 20 Cote cry
- 22 It's a crime
- 23 Cousin's mom
- 24 Watch chain ending
- 25 Enzyme
- 26 Reductions
- 27 Bridge
- 29 Punk-rock
- 30 River blocker
- 37 Nike rival
- 39 Defy authority
- 40 Overhead trains
- 41 Faux pas
- 42 Section
- 43 Epidermis
- 44 Writer Ephron
- 45 Verdon
- 46 Unforeseen problem
- 49 Hearty brew
- 50 Bill's partner

Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	S	T	A	P	A	S	A	F	E	W
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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I SUPPOSE THE PRIMARY PLACE IN WHICH COMPANY DIRECTORS MEET WOULD BE THE MASTER BOARDROOM.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: H equals M

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Fundraiser started to replace burned teepee

KS LAWRENCE — A fundraiser is underway to replace a teepee that burned on the Haskell Indian Nations University campus in Lawrence. The Lawrence Journal-World reported that fire had almost completely consumed the teepee's sheathing when fire crews responded. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical Division Chief Dan Fagan said the cause of the fire is still unknown, but arson is a possibility. Haskell Foundation executive director Aaron Hove said the teepee will cost \$2,500 to \$3,000 to replace.

Peacock on the prowl falls for officer's decoy

MA BOSTON — A Boston police officer used an electronic mating call to help capture a peacock that had escaped from a nearby zoo. An officer lured the curious peacock that had escaped from Franklin Park Zoo into a fenced-in yard while playing a mating call on his cellphone. The Boston Globe reported.

The officers on patrol in the Roxbury area were approached by a concerned citizen, who reported that the bird, named Snowbank, had escaped from the zoo, Boston police said in a statement.

Snowbank was returned to the zoo and is reported to be doing well, according to zoo officials.

Man caught after chase in stolen police Humvee

AZ KINGMAN — A man accused of stealing a police vehicle was arrested in Kingman after leading authorities on a car pursuit.

Kingman police say they received reports that a Humvee was driving erratically and hit another car. Officers tried to pull the driver over, but the vehicle accelerated.

The Humvee stalled, but the driver refused officers' request to get out of the vehicle. Authorities say the suspect then got the Humvee started again and hit two Kingman police cars.

Police booked Michael Joseph Lapeer, 26, into Mohave County Jail on aggravated assault, burglary, theft of means of transportation and criminal damage.

Man who sought trial by combat found not insane

IA HARLAN — A Kansas man who sought legal permission in Iowa to engage in a sword fight with his ex-wife is not insane but merely angry over their child custody arrangement, according to a psychological evaluation.

David Ostrom of Paola, Kan., asked in a Jan. 3 court filing to be allowed to fight his former wife, Bridgett Ostrom of Harlan and her attorney, Matthew Hudson, so that he can "rend their souls" from their bodies. The Ostroms have been embroiled in disputes over custody and visitation issues,



Eric Gay/AP

Blessings from above

Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller, right, prepares to take part in a flyover of San Antonio with the Tex Hill Wing of the Commemorative Air Force to bless the city and pray for protection from the COVID-19 pandemic in San Antonio. Garcia-Siller flew over the city at 1,000 feet in a World War II-era plane named "Ole Yeller" as he blessed San Antonio parishes and offered hope to the city.

and property tax payments.

An Iowa judge responded by temporarily suspending David Ostrom's child visitation and ordering the evaluation. It found he is not troubled, but has "adjustment disorder with mixed emotional features," Ostrom told the Des Moines Register.

Ostrom has asked the court to order psychological evaluations of his ex-wife and her attorney.

'Happy cow' suit against Ben & Jerry's dismissed

VT BURLINGTON — A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit against Ben & Jerry's that alleged that the ice cream maker and its parent company misled consumers by saying the milk and cream in its products comes from "happy cows."

In a complaint filed Oct. 29, 2019, in Burlington, where Ben & Jerry's was founded, environmental advocate James Ehlers said only some of the farms are part of the company's "Caring Dairy" program. U.S. District Judge Christina Reiss threw out the lawsuit, saying Ben & Jerry's, owned by the multinational firm Unilever, did not claim that all its milk comes from farms enrolled in Caring Dairy, Vermont Public Radio reported.

She also noted that Ben & Jerry's no longer uses the "happy" cow label on its ice cream

THE CENSUS

\$10K

The approximate amount of damage to a Kings-ton, Mass., home caused by a fire which is being blamed on a charging hoverboard. The hoverboard was charging in a third-floor family room when the charging cord, being used for the first time, caused the hoverboard's battery pack to explode, fire investigators said. No injuries were reported and residents were not displaced.

cartons.

Bear paw print makes an impression at beach

NC CAPE LOOKOUT — National Park Service rangers are telling beachgoers at Cape Lookout to be on the lookout for a black bear.

In a Facebook post, Cape Lookout National Seashore said that a park biologist found a bear's paw print in the sand on South Core Banks, part of the chain of Outer Banks barrier islands.

The park says it's rare for bears to make their way onto the barrier islands, but they're excellent swimmers and can generally make their way across inlets to hop from island to island.

Police: Man shot after attacking Publix workers

GA ROSWELL — A Georgia man accused of attacking grocery store workers and officers was shot by police

and hospitalized.

Police received a call that Jeffrey Thomas Moore, 22, was attacking employees at a Publix Super Market in Roswell as they came into work. Cobb County Police Spokesman Sgt. Wayne Delk said in a news release reported by news outlets.

Delk said police did not find Moore when they got to the store, but then received additional calls about a man assaulting people in a nearby parking lot.

Moore refused to comply with police requests and managed to run away several times, even after officers used a stun gun on him and shot him with gunfire, Georgia Bureau of Investigations spokeswoman Natalie Ammons said in a statement.

He was taken into custody after investigators found him in a wooded area.

Downed drone had 2 packages of meth

AZ SAN LUIS — A U.S. Border Patrol agent

at the Yuma Station recovered a downed drone containing two packages of methamphetamine, authorities said.

They said agents reported a downed drone near the New Canal on the west side of San Luis.

Along with the drone were two packages of a white powdery substance later determined to be meth.

Border Patrol officials said the total weight of the narcotics was 727 grams with an estimated street value of \$3,200.

They said the direction of the drone indicates that it had come from Mexico.

Teen sinks shrimp boat for Eagle Scout project

AL ORANGE BEACH — An Alabama teen earned his Eagle Scout badge by accomplishing an unusual service project: Sinking a shrimp boat in the Gulf of Mexico.

Garrett Ard is the son and grandson of fishing captains in Orange Beach, where multiple boats have been sunk offshore to attract fish for anglers. So Ard raised \$25,000 to purchase an old, 50-foot-long steel shrimp boat named Southern Heritage and sink it in 90 feet of water.

Ard said the project was in memory of his late grandfather Glove Ard, a charter boat captain.

From wire reports

FACES

Cannes empty on what would have been film fest's first day

By THOMAS ADAMSON
and DANIEL COLE
Associated Press

The stars of Cannes Film Festival have stayed home, its prestigious grounds repurposed as a homeless shelter, and the beaches closed.

The French Riviera resort of Cannes would normally be abuzz with cinema glitterati on a Tuesday — scheduled as the opening night of the annual festival — but during the time of coronavirus, it was a ghost town.

The world's biggest film festival was canceled this year for the first time since World War II.

A couple of mask-wearing residents sat on the edge of the empty promenade to catch the morning sun, dangling their feet above the sand and next to an "Access and Swimming Prohibited" sign. An elderly group played petanque quietly next to the deserted roads. And on Tuesday, on the iconic billboard reserved for each year's festival poster, a large message of "THANK YOU" for coronavirus emergency workers was installed symbolically, instead.

"I'm overcome with a great sense of melancholy and nostalgia," Cannes Delegate General Thierry Fremaux told Screen Daily about this unprecedented week. "Cannes has only ever been canceled once, due to the Second World War, and stopped once, in May '68."

"I could never have imagined something like this. Who could foresee that so many countries around the world would be caught out by the epidemic?"

Yet, while the cancellation represents a blow to the movie stars and directors it serves, it has also devastated the legions of businesses and unsung subcontractors that rely on the festival.

"For us, it's really a very big (financial) loss. The festival represents a large part of our annual revenues so it's very serious problem," said Joseph Coppia, owner of a snack-vending kiosk.

For others, it's even worse. Pierre Dambine works building film stands inside the Palais des Festivals, the retro building complex in which the screenings and awards ceremonies take place.

"There is no more work at all. We don't know at all when things will resume," Dambine said.

Since March, the local government repurposed the festival's building complex as a shelter for homeless. Every day, dozens of the formerly destitute can be seen walking through a fenced-off area, where journalists were once used to interviewing the likes of Marion Cotillard.

Fremaux said the cancellation of this year's events won't stop the festival recognizing 2020's film talent — and Cannes organizers will announce an Official Selection for this year at the beginning of June.



'Unhinged' plan

Russell Crowe movie seeks an audience in July among lingering coronavirus concerns

By RYAN FAUGHNDER
Los Angeles Times

In recent weeks, Hollywood studios and movie theater chains have held out hope that cinemas will be back in business in July, and that audiences will be eager to return.

Veteran film producer Mark Gill is betting the launch of his new studio on whether or not that dream becomes reality. Gill's company Solstice Studios will release the new Russell Crowe psychological thriller "Unhinged" in cinemas on July 1, the former Miramax executive said Tuesday. Although it's unclear how many theaters will open by then, the film will be the first major new theatrical release since the coronavirus outbreak shuttered U.S. multiplexes in mid-March.

"There's a risk attached to it, obviously," said Gill, 57. "We launched our company about 18 months ago to make movies for movie theaters. I think you need to stand up for theaters at any time, really, but especially at this time."

The movie's premiere will mark an early test of whether audiences are itching to return to movie theaters after a long period of limited entertainment options and copious Netflix binge-watching. "Unhinged" stars the "Gladiator" and "A Beautiful Mind" actor as a man whose road rage gets way out of hand.

It's an especially risky debut for Hollywood despite Solstice, which Gill founded in October 2018 with \$400 million in funding, including \$150 million from London-based financier Ingenious Media. The company aims to produce three to five movies a year, mostly with production budgets from \$30 million to \$80 million ("Unhinged" came in at \$33 million). It also hopes to acquire a handful of movies for U.S. release.

Setting the stage for its first movie now may seem like a Hail Mary play at a time when much of the country is still in the throes of a public health emergency. The planned debut is more than two weeks before Christopher Nolan's new movie "Tenet" hits the multiplex on July 17, which will be followed by Walt Disney Co.'s live-action "Mulan" remake on July 24.

But Gill said he's not deterred. He said he was heartened by a survey his company commissioned to determine the willingness of audiences

to show up at cinemas. Of the 1,000 moviegoers who were polled, 80% said they wanted to go back to movie theaters in July. Moviegoers are defined as people who go six times a year or more.

"I think there's a lot to be said for pent-up demand to get out of the house," Gill said. "I think that's very, very real."

July is about the earliest major theater chains are expected to reopen in the U.S. Plano, Texas-based Cinemark Holdings recently pinpointed July 1, a Wednesday, as its target for getting back in business. AMC Theatres, the world's largest cinema circuit, has also signaled that it hopes to open its doors that month.

States including Georgia and Texas have eased restrictions to allow theaters to operate at limited capacity, but not all chains have taken the governors up on their invitation to resume operations. Most cinema owners don't want to reopen without major studio productions to put on their screens.

Gill said he landed on the release date after consulting with the National Association of Theatre Owners, the Washington, D.C.-based lobbying organization, as well as the nation's largest exhibitors, AMC, Regal and Cinemark.

The domestic release of "Unhinged" is expected to follow or coincide with its debut in countries including Australia, China, Germany, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Taiwan, the company said.

The still-potent disease adds a unique hurdle to the movie's box office prospects. Social distancing restrictions will probably still be in place in many areas, and analysts don't expect moviegoing to return to pre-pandemic levels until there's a vaccine, if ever.

And even without fears of the coronavirus, there was no guarantee "Unhinged" would be a hit. Distributors have struggled in recent years to find audiences for mid-budget movies, as the audience for such films migrates online.

On the plus side, the new movie won't be facing competition for screens. Until "Unhinged," the theaters that reopen will probably be playing older titles to get customers used to the idea of going back.

"It won't be, 'do you want to go to the movies?,' it'll be, 'do you want to go to the movie?'" Gill joked.

Prince concert from 1985 to be livestreamed

From wire reports

Want to relive the historic Purple Rain Tour with Prince & the New Power Generation? A recording of their March 30, 1985, concert in Syracuse, N.Y., will be livestreamed on Prince's YouTube channel from Thursday to Sunday. The album will be available for purchase digitally for the first time on Friday.

But Purple aficionados may already have it — because it was issued as a VHS and laserdisc in 1985, and it was included as a DVD in the deluxe reissue of "Purple Rain" in 2017.

The digital release events include a pre-party on Thursday, when Prince & the New Power Generation drummer Bobby Z will talk about the tour at 6 p.m. in a live Q&A with Andrea Swenson, a host and writer at Minnesota Public Radio's The Current.

The free livestream begins at 7 p.m. CT Thursday and goes until 11:59 p.m. Sunday.

Hart, Jonas to help out show 'Regular Heroes'

The new Amazon series about everyday people who are making an impact in the fight against the coronavirus is getting an assist of its own — from Kevin Hart and Nick Jonas.

The comedian and musician will both make special guest appearances on the eight-episode docuseries "Regular Heroes," offering encouragement and donations.

The series premiered on Amazon Prime Video on May 8 and new episodes will be available every Friday through June 26. Alicia Keys was part of the premiere episode.

Broadway shutdown to last through summer

The shutdown on Broadway has been extended again — until at least early September.

Although an exact date for performances to resume has yet to be determined, Broadway producers are now offering refunds and exchanges for tickets purchased for shows through Sept. 6.

Broadway theaters abruptly closed on March 12, knocking out all shows — including 16 that were still scheduled to open. Producers, citing health and city authorities, previously extended the shutdown to June 7.

Broadway actor emerges from coma

Coronavirus-stricken Broadway actor Nick Cordero has awoken from the medically induced coma he entered in late March. His wife, Amanda Kloots, announced Tuesday.

Kloots said Cordero's doctor relayed that the actor is still weak but is responding to commands at Los Angeles Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

Cordero, 41, had his leg amputated last month.

Russell Crowe stars in "Unhinged," which is scheduled to come out July 1. It will be the first major new theatrical release since movie theaters closed across the U.S. in mid-March.

Solstice Studios

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OPINION

Tea party fatigue cramps shutdown protesters

By KATHLEEN PARKER
Washington Post Writers Group

Just as Romantics eventually learn that no amount of passion or staging can fully recapture love's first blushes, political movements often suffer the ennui and self-parody of attempted re-creations.

Recent attempts to re-enact the erstwhile tea party protests in a movement to oppose coronavirus-related shutdowns have shown signs of fizzling despite President Donald Trump's weird cheerleading. They are, after all, shouting down Trump's own guidelines for trying to contain the new coronavirus, which has afflicted more than 1.3 million Americans and led to more than 81,000 deaths.

And counting. The protesters began losing steam when the Koch network, underwriters of the tea party movement from a decade ago, decided to turn with scientists instead of the gun-toting provocateurs who led the spring-green grass around state capitals. The CEO of Americans for Prosperity, the main political arm of the Koch network, said that they prefer working with doctors, data crunchers and public policy leaders to create guidelines for a safe and staggered reopening of American businesses.

While this approach may prove challenging, the concept itself is simple. Based on what we've learned since January, a modified return to "normal" is the only prudent course of action, as credible experts have said again and again. But Trump, like a

child who covers his ears and sings tra-la-la-la, prefers to hear only what erupts from his lips.

Perhaps the president has fallen prey to his own imagination. Just last week, he declared that Americans have met no challenge of COVID-19 and have prevailed. Have we? Where Trump envisions parades, others see funeral processions.

Not only has the virus NOT vanished "like a miracle," as Trump predicted earlier this year, it's not going away until we have vaccines. Testifying before a Senate hearing on the pandemic on Tuesday, chief epidemiologist Tony Fauci reiterated his warning that we still don't know enough about the virus to re-enter the normal zone without great caution. When a newly heard Sen. Rand Paul challenged Fauci on the media's reporting that there's no evidence that antibodies protect against reinfection, Fauci explained the issue may be a matter of semantics.

Yes, it's likely that antibodies will protect previously infected people from reinfection, but that, there's no hard scientific evidence in the sense of long-term protocols being met to declare it definitively so. This is what one would expect a scientist to say — and it's not the media's job to insist he disregard his training and speak wishfully.

Monday preachers, meanwhile, reduced the odds of unity going forward as some Republicans added their voices to those on the ground. Rep. Andy Harris, R-Md., an obstetric anesthesiologist, rallied against the shutdown during a recent tele-town hall, saying: "They promised us 2 million

dead at the beginning of this." I half-expected him to whine and dammit we only got 80,000!

That's a curious way to lament the shelter-at-home orders that may have saved many lives. But then, only get the shelter-at-home warnings, Harris said, don't necessarily confer wisdom. In words Trump surely would appreciate, Harris accused the media of having a "vested interest" in making things sound worse than they are so that people would tune in. But then, just a few days earlier, mocking the stay-at-home warnings, Harris had called for a congressional hearing that, "We're safer from death if we're not born."

Long before COVID-19, there was risk in life everywhere. But the virus and its on-again, off-again nature makes our "normal" risk computations impossible to calculate, and you can be certain of this: The election season is well upon us when hurling mortality rates back and forth replaces good old-fashioned personal mudslinging.

As sometimes happens in election years, 2020 could be one of those Moments of Reckoning when it is hard to find anyone on the ballot to admire. But there's much to love amid the strife of these moments. As a president might have said, the virus is still with us, but we've so far prevailed despite great hurt, fear, unemployment, lost wages, depression, sadness, loneliness and grief over the sick and the dead.

While staying apart, we have come together and learned new ways to live more simply, generously and compassionately. Those are not small things.

Let's not let our politics — or politicians — take that away.

Take off the gloves against Chinese cybercrime

By JOSH ROGIN

The Washington Post

The U.S. government is reportedly set to accuse China's state-run hacking groups of attacking U.S. research institutions and pharmaceutical companies to steal new coronavirus data, treatments and vaccines. This ought to be a wake-up call. The truth is that the United States has yet to use its strongest tools to punish and deter China from its widespread and continuing use of state-sponsored cybercrime.

The mere fact the Chinese government is attempting to steal coronavirus information should make us all blame for the lack of U.S.-China cooperation on the pandemic lies primarily on the Chinese side. China has restricted its own researchers from sharing coronavirus research and has refused to hand over early virus samples. Chinese research institutions have even tried to copy and patent leading U.S. drug sent to China for trials.

Now, China is trying to steal coronavirus data from inside U.S. institutions through hacking and "nontraditional actors," according to a draft notice prepared by the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security (and seen by The New York Times). Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers' didn't confirm the report, but he talked about the threat Monday on CNBC.

"It would be crazy to think that right now the Chinese were not behind some of the cyber activity that we're seeing targeting U.S. pharmaceutical companies and targeting research institutions," he said. "We know that they are doing coronavirus research, treatments and vaccines," he said. "This is the holy grail of biomedical research right now, [and has] tremendous value both commercially and geopolitically."

Some argue science should be open and shared — especially during a worldwide pandemic — but Beijing clearly doesn't see

it that way. The Chinese leadership knows that stealing research can net huge gains. China is already playing this game, but it is by far the worst offender.

That's why officials and experts are wondering why the U.S. government won't deploy its most powerful weapon for fighting cybercrime, Treasury Department sanctions, against Chinese entities the way it does for criminals in Russia, North Korea and Iran. The Justice Department has indicted 38 Chinese firms or individuals for cyber-related economic or political espionage — but only two have faced Treasury Department sanctions, and those were for money laundering related to North Korea, according to new research published by the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, a Washington-based conservative think tank. Compare that to 77 Russian, 30 Iranian and six North Korean entities sanctioned for the same crimes.

"The greatest disparity in Washington's use of sanctions and indictments against cybercriminals is the frequency with which the United States employs sanctions to combat Chinese hackers," the report states.

Treasury already has the authority to go after other Chinese criminals. President Barack Obama issued an executive order in November 2013 in April 2015 Obama issued an executive order in April 2015. President Donald Trump signed the agreement at their September 2015 summit to cease all cyberespionage related to intellectual property theft, but Beijing has largely ignored its commitments.

The Justice Department under President Donald Trump has ramped up prosecution of Chinese cybercriminals, but the department arrested the head of Harvard's chemistry department for hiding his financial relationship with the Chinese government's Thousand Talents recruiting program; and a Chinese researcher was arrested at a Beijing Logan International Airport after he was caught with 21 vials

of biomedical research samples stuffed in a sock in his luggage. But the Justice Department can only get the thieves who are actually in the U.S. Their corporate or government bosses are going unpunished. In an April online event hosted by Future in Review, a consulting and research firm, Demers suggested that sanctions were needed to really stop the abuses.

"The goal here has to be to provide economic pain for economic pain," he said. "We have to put different tools across the government to really make sure we are denying the thief the benefit of his theft."

The problem goes well beyond biomedical research. The Justice Department has indicted Huawei, four of its subsidiaries and its chief financial officer for crimes including evading U.S. sanctions on Iran, but there are no U.S. Treasury sanctions on Huawei. Comac, the Chinese state-owned airliner manufacturer, stole egregiously to build the plane it now sells to compete with Airbus and Boeing. But yet, no sanctions.

Trevor Logan, the co-author of the FDD report, said sanctions are effectively the only way we can deter many Chinese entities that are outside the reach of U.S. law enforcement. By holding back on sanctions, we are signaling to Beijing that it need not uphold the agreements it signs.

"Either we don't take a stand at all and those agreements are not worth the paper they are written on. Or we actually enforce our agreements in cyberspace," he said.

To be sure, sanctions carry costs and risks and should not be used flippantly. The U.S.-China economic relationship is complex, and our trade agreement with Beijing is still being tested. But China's attempts to hack our coronavirus research bring urgency to the need to show Beijing that it can't steal its way to economic dominance. As of now, China is clearly not getting the message.

Josh Rogin is a columnist for the Global Opinions section of The Washington Post.



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Read letters from kids to
deployed servicemembers and
their heartwarming responses.



NBA

Poll by union shows support to play, if safe

By TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

MIAMI — A person familiar with the results of a poll of NBA players taken by their union says there would be “overwhelming” support for any plan that has this season resuming in a safe way amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The poll conducted by the National Basketball Players Association was informal but gave a clear sense that players would like to not only get to the playoffs but also resume at least some of the regular season, according to the person who shared details with The Associated Press on Tuesday on the condition of anonymity because it was not to be detailed publicly.

The exact results of the poll were unknown, and the methodology behind the poll — including how many players participated — was unclear.

The NBPA sent a letter to agents Tuesday discussing, among other things, the results of the player polling and some details of the call the union and its membership had late last week with NBA Commissioner Adam Silver. In that call, Silver talked about the possibility of resuming a season without fans and playing at a centralized site — notions that have been discussed for some time.

There are numerous hurdles to clear to get games back, the need for testing of players and staff when play resumes among them, and what could be viewed as positive signs Tuesday were just that — signs, not absolute indicators that there is a path for a return to play this season.

Golden State coach Steve Kerr, whose team wouldn't be headed to the playoffs and was preparing to play home games in an empty arena because of the virus threat before the league suspended the season, told radio station 95.7 The Game in the Bay Area on Tuesday that he believes the Warriors' season is over.

“We'll be good soldiers. If the league asks us to play more games, we'll play,” Kerr said. “I don't anticipate that happening, but we'll be ready if it does. And in the meantime, you know, it's not my decision, it's not our decision — it's the NBA's decision, what to do, when to do it.”

NBA players had somewhat different reactions. Memphis' Ja Morant, the likely frontrunner for rookie of the year, tweeted that he wants to play. And Orlando guard Evan Turner said international soccer inching toward a return



MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

Golden State Warriors head coach Steve Kerr said he believes his team's season is over, but that he will do whatever the league asks.

“gives me hope” that the NBA can do the same.

“Everybody in the league, we want to finish this year,” Cleveland's Larry Nance Jr. said earlier Tuesday. “One, obviously because we love the game, but at the same time, there's a serious chance of us missing out on, what, 20-plus percent of our contracts, which is for a lot of guys pretty significant.”

The NBA suspended its season on March 11 with 259 regular season games remaining, or roughly one-fifth of the season.

Players have been paid in full on each of the four paydays that have followed, though that will change Friday when most of the league sees a 25% reduction in their paycheck.

Players stand to lose roughly \$850 million in gross salary if the regular season is not resumed and the NBA exercises its right to withhold roughly 1.08% of each player's salary for any game that is ultimately canceled. On average, that would mean each NBA player stands to lose about 21% of his total salary. No games have been officially canceled yet; the 25% reduction starting with Friday's check was negotiated between the league and the union with the expectation that the season will eventually be shortened.

A handful of teams have opened their facilities for voluntary workouts; Miami and Orlando were expected to be the next two teams to do so on Wednesday.

AP Sports Writer Tom Withers in Cleveland contributed.



TONY DEJAK/AP

Cleveland Cavaliers forward Larry Nance Jr., after being cooped up for nearly two months because of the COVID-19 pandemic, said he was grateful to work out at the team's facility last week.

Nance, other players just glad to get back on court

By TOM WITHERS
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — There's been a massive void in Larry Nance Jr.'s life that no amount of watching Korean soccer games, practicing yoga, riding a stationary bike or playing video games can ever replace.

Basketball is his world.

The COVID-19 pandemic has deprived Nance of his greatest passion and his profession, which is why the Cleveland Cavaliers forward was grateful to get back on a real court — even for a short while.

Nance is one of the few NBA players who have been able to work out after teams were granted permission to reopen their training facilities, which have been closed nearly two months by a virus outbreak that has paused the season and placed its conclusion in peril.

Nance returned to the Cavs' complex on Friday, and for two hours, the 27-year-old felt whole again.

“This is the longest I haven't played a game of basketball in my entire life,” he said Tuesday on a Zoom conference call.

The Cavs and Portland Trail Blazers were the first teams to reopen their facilities last week for structured, voluntary workouts that are restricted to one player and one coach at each basket. More teams are scheduled to hold workouts this week as more states loosen guidelines that have brought team sports in North America to a standstill.

Nance, who acknowledged getting a coronavirus test out of “panic” in March, said that while the conditions are somewhat surreal for practicing, he felt secure because of masks — and other safety measures.

“For me that just provides a sense of security,” he said of the facial coverings. “You get your own two basketballs — that's it. You have your one coach wearing masks and gloves that are unique to you.

Even in the weight room, you pick up a weight, and if I was using 45s (pounds), nobody else that day was allowed to use the 45s until they were cleaned and sterilized, so to me it was so well regimented that I feel pretty safe going.”

Last week, NBA Commissioner Adam Silver spoke with players and presented some plans the league is considering to complete the season. Some of the options include games without fans and games at a centralized location, with Florida among the possibilities.

Nance said he's cautiously optimistic about a resumption. And while the Cavs aren't chasing a title — they were 19-46 when the season was shut down — he feels it's imperative the league crowns a champion.

“We're not in position to win a championship this year but if I was, if I was Giannis (Antetokounmpo), if I was LeBron (James), if I was Kawhi (Leonard), if I was on one of those championship caliber teams, I'd be pretty upset about it,” he said. “It's very rare in this league that a chance like this comes along that's taken a valuable year off someone's career.”

“Everybody in the league, we want to finish this year. One, obviously because we love the game, but at the same time there's a serious chance of us missing out on, what, 20-plus percent of our contracts, which is for a lot of guys pretty significant.”

Like many sports fans, Nance has spent part of his quarantine watching “The Last Dance,” the 10-part ESPN documentary on Michael Jordan and his final season with the Chicago Bulls. Nance has a unique perspective since his father, Larry Sr., played against Jordan for many years.

The episodes have turned into weeklong one-on-one battles between the Nances.

“Our whole debate while watching the show is just new versus old,” Nance said. “Why Michael could have scored more in today's NBA, but also why LeBron would have been so dominant in that league. And while it's been about M.J., we've been comparing, contrasting ersas and players. It comes on Sunday, but the conversations carry on until next Sunday.”

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Pac-12 coaches want even start

Schools push NCAA to set date

BY RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press

As Pac-12 football coaches pitched an NCAA-mandated uniform start to the season, some of the latest plans to fight the coronavirus in California further muddled how college teams will return to play in the West.

Washington coach Jimmy Lake said Tuesday in a video conference with reporters that he would prefer for all major college teams to begin six weeks of preparation for the season at the same time.

"I'm of the opinion it would be great if the NCAA made a blanket rule for the whole nation of when we would start, and I understand some states may be less hit by this than most. And I'm sure there's going to be some different opinions on this," Lake said. "In my opinion, I believe the NCAA should step in and say, 'OK, here's the date when everybody can start.'"

Colorado coach Karl Dorrell and Utah's Kyle Whittingham backed Lake's idea. For the season to start on time around Labor Day weekend, when Washington

is scheduled to host Michigan, teams would need to begin six weeks of conditioning and practice in mid-July.

Meanwhile on Tuesday, a Los Angeles County public health official said, according to The Los Angeles Times, that the county's stay-at-home order is likely to extend through July. That could leave Pac-12 members USC and UCLA waiting until at least August before they begin preparing. Also, the chancellor of the California State University system said he expects the vast majority of classes on the system's 23 campuses to be taught online in the fall. Shortly after that announcement, the California College Athletic Association, an NCAA Division II conference, suspended its fall sports season.

None of the Pac-12 schools are part of the California State University system, but San Jose State, San Diego State and Fresno State are all FBS schools competing in the Mountain West.

The presidents of those three schools and Mountain West Commissioner Craig Thompson later released a joint statement.



TNS

USC Coach Clay Helton said Monday the Pac-12 has talked about playing an all-conference, 11-game football schedule if necessary, but that decision is still weeks away.

"Certainly, all conversations are led by academics, as well as public health and safety. Within that framework, more determinations are necessary. All three institutions will work closely with the Mountain West. No decisions on athletics have been made."

Some CSU system schools such as Sacramento State and Cal Poly compete in FCS, Division I's second tier.

Pac-12 schools California and UCLA are part of the University of California system.

College sports leaders, including NCAA President Mark Emmert, have said college athletes can't return to campuses that are not open to the rest of the student

body. What exactly constitutes an open campus has not been defined.

The NCAA doesn't have much authority over major college football. Conferences are taking the lead when it comes to how and when the season will start, with the Power Five commissioners at the forefront.

Emmert told ESPN on Tuesday the NCAA will not mandate a start date for football season because state and local authorities will be driving those decisions.

Even Emmert has acknowledged it is probably not realistic to think that 130 major college football schools across 41 states — all taking different ap-

proaches to fighting COVID-19 — will be in position to start competing at the same time.

Knowing the season could be delayed or disrupted by the pandemic, conferences and schools are looking into all sorts of contingency plans.

USC coach Clay Helton said Monday the Pac-12 has talked about playing an all-conference, 11-game football schedule if necessary, but any decisions on what the upcoming season will look like are still weeks away from being made.

"I think where we are is the definition of a fluid situation," Stanford coach David Shaw said Monday.

Will virus spark prospects to stay closer to home?

By STEVE MEGAREE
Associated Press

Concerns about the coronavirus are preventing football prospects from visiting campuses this spring and keeping coaches from traveling to evaluate them.

North Carolina coach Mack Brown said he believes this could cause more 2021 recruits to stay closer to home, though that remains up for debate.

"I do think all the kids being at home with their families, there is a little concern," Brown said. "You love your family, you're wanting everybody healthy. So I do think that this is encouraging people to stay closer to home."

Brown built the Tar Heels into a power in the 1990s by making sure North Carolina's best recruits didn't leave the state. He is doing it again in his second stint at Chapel Hill.

Eleven of the top 13 verbally committed 2021 prospects from North Carolina have chosen the Tar Heels, according to composite rankings of recruiting sites compiled by 247Sports.

That same database shows that, so far, recruits are not necessarily sticking closer to home because of the pandemic: More than 60% of verbally committed prospects to Power Five schools who made their decisions on or before March 11 — the day the NBA sus-



CHUCK BURTON/AP

North Carolina coach Mack Brown has already received verbal commitments from 11 of the top 13 North Carolina prospects.

ended play to trigger the general shutdown of the sports world — chose schools within 300 miles of their hometowns.

Yet, more than half the recruits who committed to Power Five schools since March 11 selected a college more than 300 miles away.

Whether they're opting to stay near home, prospects are deciding earlier than ever. 247Sports reported that 627 players in the 2021 class had committed by May 6 — more than twice the number of 2020 prospects who had announced decisions by that date.

"Kids want to get settled and

feel like they've got a scholarship locked up," said Barton Simmons, the 247Sports director of scouting. "On the other side, colleges (see that) with the writing being on the wall that the evaluation period is essentially done, their board is what their board is. They're feeling a little bit of pressure to go ahead and get guys committed, get some guys locked in and then go from there."

Many prospects aren't hesitating to pick a school far away.

Minnesota's list of 11 verbal commitments since March 11 includes three players from Texas, two from Georgia and one from

Arizona. Tennessee's flurry of 12 verbal commitments since April 10 includes three players from Florida schools or academies, one from Texas and none from the state of Tennessee.

"I feel the pandemic will be over by the time I get to Tennessee," said DeShawn Rucker, a defensive back from Tallahassee, Fla.

Rucker at least got a chance to visit Tennessee before the pandemic hit. Defensive back Steven Ortiz of Goodyear, Ariz., committed to Minnesota without having seen the campus.

Ortiz's father, Steven Ortiz Sr., said his son did get a "virtual tour" of campus from his home.

"They would show us footage of the facility, then a coach would come and speak to us about the program itself. It was definitely a different experience, but most schools — the facilities, the weightlifting and the cafeterias are all state-of-the-art — so you're not looking at anything (with) too big of a difference in terms of the facilities," Ortiz Sr. said.

Ortiz Sr. said his son got a sense of the culture of Minnesota's program through conversations with Gophers coach P.J. Fleck. Rucker said he liked Tennessee in part because Jeremy Pruitt was more active than any other head coach in contacting him.

While some staffs have shown

they can draw players from all over the country even during a pandemic, Simmons believes more prospects eventually will decide to stay closer to home.

Part of the reason is the NCAA instituted a recruiting dead period through May 31, preventing programs from getting an up-close look at out-of-state prospects. No wonder 13 of North Carolina's 14 verbal commitments are in state.

"A lot of kids, they can drive to your campus, come for games, come for camps, so we've gotten to really know these kids," Brown said. "So if it's a no-brainer and we really want him, we're already a year-and-a-half ahead of schools that are out of state that haven't seen the kids."

Simmons predicts there won't be as many examples of guys going all the way across the country. For example, four of the 247Sports Composite's top nine 2020 prospects from California signed with Alabama, Georgia or Clemson. Maybe more of those players stay in Pac-12 country this time.

"I think across the board, I would expect a little bit more of a trend of kids staying, not necessarily home, but closer to home," Simmons said.

AP sports writers Aaron Beard, Dave Campbell, John Marshall, Mitch Stacy and Teresa M. Walker contributed to this report.

SPORTS BRIEFS/NFL/MINOR LEAGUES

Briefly

MAC scaling back, shuttering tournaments

The Mid-American Conference is eliminating postseason tournaments in eight sports, including baseball and softball, and men's and women's basketball are among nine sports that will have postseason scaled back.

The MAC's announced the cost-cutting move Tuesday in response to the financial crisis being brought on by the coronavirus pandemic.

Postseason tournaments will also be discontinued in field hockey, women's lacrosse, men's and women's tennis and men's and women's soccer. Champions in the 12-team conference will be determined by regular-season results in sports without postseason tournaments.

Men's and women's basketball tournaments will only include the top eight teams in the final regular-season standings. Regular-season basketball schedules will increase to 20 conference games and opening-round, on-campus tournament games will be eliminated.

Volleyball, men's and women's swimming and diving, men's and women's indoor and outdoor track and field and men's and women's golf will also have postseasons with fewer participants.

Source: Coyotes CEO no longer with team

GLENDAL, Ariz. — Arizona Coyotes president and owner Brian Cohen is no longer with the organization, a person familiar with the move told The Associated Press.

The person spoke Tuesday on condition of anonymity because no formal announcement has been made. No other details were provided.

Cohen has been with the Coyotes since being hired in 2015 as chief operating officer and chief legal officer by previous owner Andrew Barroway. Cohen was named president and CEO in 2017 after Steve Patterson stepped back to serve as a consultant and adviser after a year on the job.

Women's golf starts up again in South Korea

SEOUL, South Korea — The South Korean women's golf tour is starting up again with the KLPGA Championship opening on Thursday, an event that will be played without fans on the course.

Women's golf in South Korea joins Korea's professional baseball and soccer leagues, which have already restarted in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

The tournament at the Lakeview Country Club located east of the capital Seoul was originally scheduled for April 30 through May 3.

Organizers said social distancing will be practiced by players and tournament officials. Players will also have hand sanitizers available. It was not clear if players would take coronavirus tests.

— Associated Press

Wentz remains focused

QB follows bigger plan due to faith

By ROB MAADDI
Associated Press

Injuries forced Carson Wentz to watch another quarterback lead the Philadelphia Eagles to their first Super Bowl title and put him on the sideline for playoff games in each of the next two seasons.

Now the franchise player with the big contract saw his team use a second-round pick on a quarterback who was runner-up for the Heisman Trophy last year.

The Eagles didn't draft Jalen Hurts to compete with Wentz, only to provide insurance. That hasn't stopped some media and fans from creating a quarterback controversy and interpreting the pick as a slight against Wentz.

Constant scrutiny and intense criticism are part of the job for NFL quarterbacks. In Philly, it's loud and consistent.

But Wentz blocked it out. He doesn't break. He won't allow disappointment, frustration or setbacks to bring him down. Nor does he let success — he finished third in NFL MVP voting in 2017 and signed a contract extension with \$108 million guaranteed last summer — inflate his ego.

The reason is his strong Christian faith.

"It can be easy to get consumed with your worldly, fleshly train of thought or desires or whatever," Wentz explained in a wide-ranging interview with The Associ-



CHRIS SZAGALA/AP

Injuries forced Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Carson Wentz to watch another quarterback lead the Eagles to their first Super Bowl title and sidelined him for playoff games each of the next two seasons.

NFL scoreboard

Tuesday's transactions

FOOTBALL
National Football League
ARIZONA CARDINALS — Re-signed CB Kevin Peterson to a one-year contract.
Released CB Andre Chachere.
BALTIMORE RAVENS — Re-signed OLB Pernell McPhee. Waived WR Sean Modster.
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Signed G Danny Fritter.
LAS VEGAS RAIDERS — Agreed to terms with CB Prince Amukamani.
MIAMI DOLPHINS — Signed QB Tua Tagovailoa. Released DE Curtis Weaver and LS Blake Ferguson.

ated Press this week. "But when you look at everything from an internal perspective, from a Biblical perspective, and just know that this is so much bigger than just me and my life or where I'm at in my career, football, it's so much bigger."

Wentz plans to embrace Hurts the same way he did Nick Foles,

who became a Philly hero after earning Super Bowl MVP honors when he led the Eagles over the Patriots in February 2018. Foles and Wentz were close during the two seasons they played together. They share the same faith, went to the same church along with third-string quarterback Nate Sudfeld and spent plenty of time together. Hurts has similar religious beliefs.

"I believe wholeheartedly that we're going to hit it off and we'll be stronger together for the good of the team," Wentz said of Hurts, who threw for 3,851 yards and 32 touchdowns at Oklahoma in 2019. "It just seems like you instantly connect and you instantly know that person on a deeper level because of the mutual relationship that you share with Christ."

The Eagles won the NFC East title last season despite numerous injuries on offense because Wentz was excellent down the

stretch. He led to them to four straight wins in December while throwing to a group of wide receivers who were off the practice squad and waiver wire. Wentz set a franchise record with 4,039 yards passing and became the first quarterback in NFL history to throw 20 or more touchdowns and seven or fewer interceptions in three straight seasons.

But in the first quarter of his first career playoff game, Wentz was knocked out with a concussion when Jadeveon Clowney hit him in the helmet from behind as he was already going down.

Clowney currently is a free agent and the Eagles have inquired about him. Wentz said he would have no problem welcoming him in the locker room.

"I have the utmost confidence in (management's) ability to make the team as good as they can to put us in the best situation to win games," Wentz said.

Cloudy: Minor leagues can't fall back on TV revenue

FROM BACK PAGE

MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred estimated a 40% loss of revenue if baseball is played with no fans and Herrick Feinstein sports law group co-chair Irwin Kishner estimated it is probably twice that for minor league sports. As it is, Green doesn't expect minor league baseball this year, while both the ECHL and the AHL canceled the rest of their hockey seasons.

Plans for 2020-21 include the grim possibility of empty or near-empty arenas.

"There's a million questions that need to be answered," minor league hockey player Nathan Paetsch said. "What's next season going to look like? What's the possibility of it starting? What type of season is it going to look like? Is

there going to be fans or no fans? Is it going to be the same length of the season?"

Smith College economics professor Andrew Zimbalist agreed with Green that ownership will affect which teams survive. He also pointed to the ill-fated second attempt by the XFL as a cautionary tale.

"Some of the younger leagues that are out there I think are really, really fragile," Zimbalist said. "I suspect that we're going to see a lot of organizations and some leagues going out of business."

There already were 40 minor league baseball teams scheduled to lose their MLB affiliations before the pandemic under a restructuring plan that would have to try to make it independently.

Beyond the teams, Syracuse University sports analytics

professor Rodney Paul is worried about the status of others as the crisis goes on. He said there could be a redistribution of teams in multiple sports around the U.S. and Canada — and perhaps smaller leagues.

"Maybe it's the same number of teams, but it's in different cities based upon how things have changed over time," Paul said. "Some of those areas that can't afford that level of team because of either population change or income change in the area or something like that changes to a different area. But my guess gets to be that the longer this goes out, the fewer of those minor league teams in total we'll have."

Green already has thought ahead to what "socially distanced" crowds might look like and hopes that treatments and a

coronavirus vaccine get things back to normal eventually. But the end of the pandemic may not be enough to pack minor league arenas and stadiums if Zimbalist is correct about the situation and economic downturn changing people's behaviors.

"It's just going to take several years to get through it all, in my view, and while that adjustment or recuperation is happening, it means that there's going to be higher rates of unemployment, lower rates of income and people are going to be more careful about how they spend their free income, their leisure income," Zimbalist said. "So I don't expect the leagues to really start flourishing again for several years."

AP sports writer John Sawrow contributed to this report.

MLB

Source: No economic plan yet in early talks

By RONALD BLUM
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Major League Baseball did not include an economic proposal during its opening presentation to the players' union on terms to start the coronavirus-delayed season.

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker criticized big leaguers for not being willing to cut pay further at a news conference on Tuesday, and Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey said his state is open to games without spectators for all the major sports starting Saturday.

The electronic meeting of MLB and the players' association lasted between three and four hours and consisted of baseball officials explaining their view of the economics, science and logistics of getting the season under way, several people familiar with the session told The Associated Press. The people spoke on condition of anonymity

“The people of Illinois and the people of the United States deserve to get their pastime back.”

J.B. Pritzker
Illinois governor

ity because no details were announced.

Owners gave the go-ahead Monday for a proposal that players receive the percentage of their 2020 salaries based on a 50-50 split of revenues MLB receives during the regular season and postseason, a person familiar with that plan told the AP. That person also spoke on condition of anonymity because the plan was not announced.

The concept would cut the expenses of

teams worried about playing in empty ballparks due to the pandemic. The union views revenue sharing as a salary cap, which it has said it will never agree to, and the concept was not presented.

If empty stadiums or neutral sites are used, an agreement with the players' association is needed to play ball.

Opening day was to have been March 26. MLB's plan could lead to the season starting around the Fourth of July with an 82-game regular season, playoffs expanding from 10 teams to 14 and the designated hitter used for the first time in games between National League teams.

MLB officials showed slides during the meeting and the union delegation, which included players, caucus and asked questions. Baseball officials explained how they would use a lab in Utah to give the sport its own testing ability, the people said.

Baseball officials also expressed concern

about a second wave of the coronavirus in the fall and their worries it could force cancellation of the postseason. While players are paid their salaries during the regular season, the bulk of MLB's national broadcasting revenue derives from the postseason.

Players agreed March 26 to a deal in which they would be paid prorated shares of salaries based on the portion of the 162-game regular-season schedule that is played. As part of that agreement, if no games are played, they would receive service time for 2020 matching what they earned last year.

"I realize that the players have the right to haggle over their salaries, but we do live in a moment where the people of Illinois and the people of the United States deserve to get their pastime back, to watch, anyway, on television," Pritzker said in response to the last question of his news conference.

COVID-19 provides Royals more time to know Matheny

By DAVE SKRETTA
Associated Press

W KANSAS CITY, Mo. — When the Kansas City Royals learned that spring training was over and they were headed home, with questions swirling around if and when they might start the season, Mike Matheny sent them each a copy of a book called "Legacy."

Author James Kerr tells the story of the All Blacks, the famed New Zealand rugby team that has won more than 75% of its matches going back a century. Kerr breaks down the Kiwis' success and teases out lessons for individuals and teams that have to do with accountability, leadership and developing a winning culture.

It's something that Matheny, who was hired this past offseason to replace the retired Ned Yost, wouldn't have been able to do during the regular season, when the daily grind chews up everybody's day. But with the coronavirus pandemic giving his players more free time than they've had since most of them were kids, Matheny

decided to take advantage by giving them a little bit of homework — and in doing so, giving them a little insight into what makes him tick, too.

"I think we're all pretty pumped to play for Mike," said pitcher Brad Keller, who has finished the book while trying to stay in shape in Arizona. "The intensity he brought when we were in spring training was bar none. The entire spring had a different vibe, a different attitude. Everybody was over losing. We were excited to get back to winning."

There is still nobody quite sure when baseball will resume.

But when it does, Keller thinks the Royals will have been able to develop a deeper relationship with their new manager than they might have otherwise. Whereas daily games would have dominated their lives in a regular season, Matheny's meetings the past few weeks on Zoom and other virtual platforms have touched not just on baseball but life in general.

"He's definitely reached out. It's about the only thing he can do, honestly, reach out and sit and



PHOTOS BY CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

Above: Kansas City Royals manager Mike Matheny, back left, watches as pitcher Jesse Hahn throws during spring training in Surprise, Ariz., on Feb. 16. The Royals had an offseason and most of spring training to get to know Matheny. Below: One unintended consequence of the coronavirus pandemic is they've gotten to know their new manager better than they could ever have imagined.

“He’s definitely reached out. It’s about the only thing he can do, honestly, reach out and sit and talk with us.”

Royals pitcher Brad Keller
on new manager Mike Matheny

talk with us," Keller said. "We go over some books — the 'Legacy' book he asked us to read. He sits with the pitchers in their meetings. Just keeping us active and keeping our minds engaged and keeping us loose. That's about the only thing he can do."

It's not surprising that Matheny would recommend a book centered on self-improvement.

After he was fired by the St. Louis Cardinals, where one of the biggest gripes among players was that Matheny was unable to reach them on a personal level, he spent a year mostly focused on himself. Sure, he was spending time as an adviser to the Royals, but Matheny also took classes in communication and read books about leadership and positive thinking.

"If we were in a normal routine," Matheny said, "we'd try to connect on a normal basis, but our minds are always just so locked into baseball. But right now we have a chance to jump in and we're hearing a lot of different stories."

Kind of like a summer camp where everybody would be sitting around a campfire swapping tales. Only it's virtual.

"We had a trivia night to get everyone on and it was a catastrophe," Matheny said with a laugh. "We have some guys with no real good Zoom protocol. We had guys laying down in the middle of our Zoom calls, and guys playing with kids and they can't figure out mute. We've gone through some things to make it a little

more efficient, but mostly we're trying to keep it in a community. Because I think our clubhouse is a microcosm of the whole world right now."

The stay-at-home orders that are beginning to be lifted across the country gave Matheny a unique chance to learn about the lives of each of them outside baseball, an opportunity that he probably wouldn't have during any sense of normalcy.

Now, he hopes that creates a more tightly bonded team when the Royals gather again.

"They're trying everything possible to get us out to play. So stay ready," Matheny said. "But this is reality. This is a shot not just to baseball but to the world, and there are some ramifications that are coming to this change and issues we're finding ourselves in, so let's be prepared when we do come back. Let's realize it doesn't necessarily need to look a certain way. Let's do what we do and understand that everyone and everything is going to look a little bit different."



SPORTS



No plan yet
Owners, players discussing
how to open season » **Page 23**

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Cloudy future

The Tacoma Defiance play the San Diego Royal in a United Soccer League match on March 11 inside an empty Cheney Stadium in Tacoma, Wash.

JOSHUA BESSEX
THE NEWS TRIBUNE / AP

Landscape for minor leagues could be altered by pandemic

By STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

As North America's pro football, basketball, baseball and hockey leagues try to play again in a pandemic, minor league sports face a more treacherous climb to return.

While the NFL, NBA or Major League Baseball can run on television revenue, it's virtually impossible for many minor leagues to survive with empty stadiums. The possibility of no games in 2020 could put some teams in jeopardy and change the landscape for attendance-driven sports in the short- and long-term future.

"There's no future for minor league sports with empty stadiums. There's zero," said Gary Green, who owns Triple-A and Double-A baseball teams and an expansion franchise in the United Soccer

'There's no future for minor league sports with empty stadiums. There's zero.'

Gary Green
Minor league owner

and how soon they can bounce back.

SEE CLOUDY ON PAGE 22

League that plays in suburban Omaha, Neb. "If some of the teams don't have deep-pocketed ownership groups or owners, I don't know how they're going to pay their bills."

It is by far the most pressing question facing Minor League Baseball, the American Hockey League, ECHL, USL and others. The minors are deeply baked into the North American sports landscape as talent developers for the majors and cheap, family friendly entertainment in towns big and small. Experts are divided on how they will survive



OCTAVIO JONES, TAMPA BAY TIMES/AP

Toronto Blue Jays minor league player Luis De Los Santos wears a mask while he prepares to fly home to the Dominican Republic on March 15 at the Tampa International Airport in Tampa, Fla.

TO OUR READERS

As the sports world pauses to join the rest of the world in fighting the coronavirus pandemic, you will see fewer sports stories in Stars and Stripes. We look forward to resuming our normal coverage when the leagues and governing bodies determine it is safe for athletes and fans to return to competition.

